

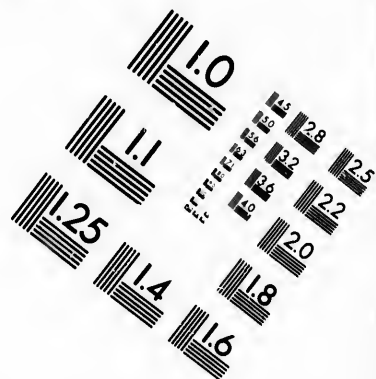
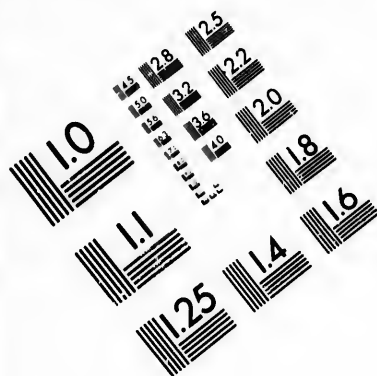
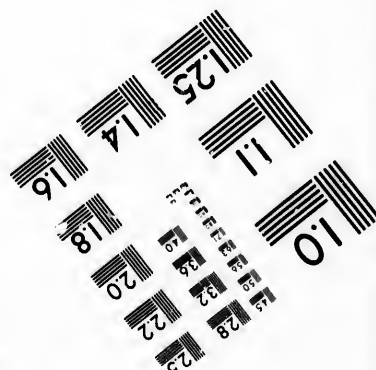
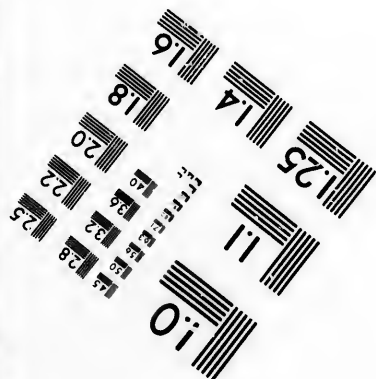
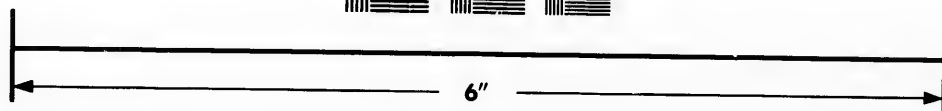
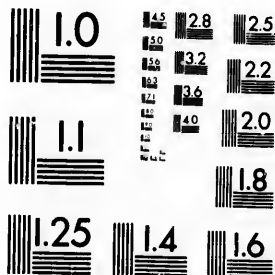


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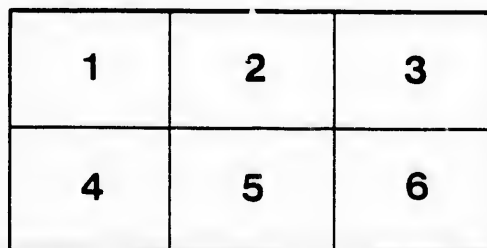
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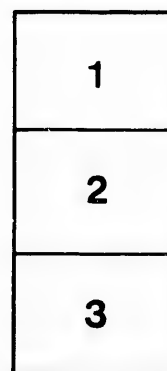
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THROUGH HUDSON'S STRAIT AND BAY.

A Naval Officer's Holiday Trip.

By CAPTAIN ALBERT HASTINGS MARKHAM, R.N.

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT FROZEN SEA," ETC.

PART I.

I HAVE selected the above title for the articles which I propose to present, with all diffidence, to the readers of GOOD WORDS, because what I am about to narrate is essentially an account of a trip which I had designed should be, if possible, carried out whenever a temporary respite from my professional labours would enable me to enjoy a thorough and complete holiday and rest.

I wanted to get away out of the reach of posts and telegraph, to bury myself for a time from the civilized world, and to be free from the receipt of all official letters and documents.

I had always had a great desire to visit the shores of Hudson's Bay, that great expanse of water that has not inaptly been termed the Mediterranean Sea of the Western hemisphere. But the difficulty of getting there seemed almost insuperable.

A passage to Hudson's Bay by either a whaler, or by the Company's annual ship, was out of the question, for many reasons which it will be unnecessary here for me to enumerate, my only chance therefore of visiting this almost "Mare incognita" (for such it has practically been, except to a few, ever since its discovery by the brave but unfortunate Henry Hudson), was to undertake a land journey, and with the aid of a canoe and some Indians, both of which I had some vague idea I should be able to procure at Winnipeg, descend one of the numerous rivers whose waters roll down to the shores of Hudson's Bay, returning if possible by a different route. I anticipated getting some fairly good shooting during my journey, whilst I should be afforded an opportunity of travelling through an interesting, because a little known region, and I would also (the most important consideration of all) be safe from the receipt of large envelopes of a bluish hue, marked On Her Majesty's Service!

With this intention I made arrangements for leaving England in the fine Cunard steamer *Etruria*, on Saturday, the 5th of June, when chance threw in my way—as I shall presently explain—an opportunity of carrying out my project in a more thorough and interesting manner, completely

capsizing the plans and arrangements that I had previously made.

A project had been started to connect Winnipeg, which may be regarded as the emporium or metropolis of the North-West, with Hudson's Bay, by the construction of a railway. It was thought, and with very good reason, that the possession of a seaport, within seven hundred miles of Winnipeg, would materially develop the commercial and industrial resources of the whole of Upper Canada, benefiting in a very great degree the grain producers and stock raisers who had settled in those fertile and rich agricultural districts of the Dominion of Canada, which extend even to the base of the Rocky Mountains.

Much opposition was, however, raised to the adoption of the proposed scheme; those antagonistic to it being principally influential men residing in Eastern Canada, and those who, although living in Winnipeg and the North-West, were pecuniarily interested in the moral and material progress of the Eastern provinces. They were fully imbued with the idea that the scheme, if attempted, would prove a financial failure, advancing as their main argument that Hudson's Bay and Strait would not be navigable for a sufficiently long period during the year, to enable ships to convey the produce of the country to European markets, and that the railway, if constructed, would therefore be inoperative for at least eight months in every year.

On the other hand, those in favour of the scheme were confident that the Strait was open to navigation for *at least* four months during each year, and in all probability for a much longer time, and they maintained that even that period would suffice not only to make the construction of the railway a financial success, but that its existence would also tend to promote the commercial development of the country.

In order to throw some light on the subject, which was admitted to be a very important one, the Dominion Government of Canada in 1884 authorized the expenditure of a large sum of money for the purpose of defraying the expenses of a steamer to be dispatched to Hudson's Bay that



Captain Markham in travelling outfit.

year, for the express purpose of establishing meteorological stations in various positions on both sides of the Strait, with the view of receiving reports on the state and condition of the ice, and obtaining full particulars regarding its movements, together with other important matters connected with the meteorology of those regions, for a period of twelve consecutive months. The Dominion Government also intimated their intention to present, as a free gift, to any company that should undertake the construction of a railway, no less than 8,400,000 acres of land, reserved from the crown lands on the line of route to be selected. So keen was the interest evinced in the proposed undertaking, that the provincial Parliament of Manitoba also voted a grant of £900,000, at 4 per cent. per annum for twenty-five years, to assist in carrying it out.

The reason for the lively interest that was displayed in the North-West, and the eagerness that was manifested to promote the scheme, is not difficult of solution.

The distance by rail from Winnipeg to New York is 1,779 miles; and from Winnipeg to

Montreal 1,425 miles. By establishing direct railway communication between Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay, the distance by rail to a seaport is reduced to something under 700 miles; and it has been estimated (but I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of the estimation, although I believe it to be *bonâ fide*), that a saving of no less than 5s. per quarter will be effected on each quarter of grain exported to Europe by the proposed route, whilst from £3 to £4 will be saved on each head of cattle so transported.

The establishment of such a route would not have the effect of lengthening, to any appreciable extent, the sea-voyage, whilst it would reduce, by more than one-half, the railway journey between England and the North-West. This is also a matter of great importance, not only to the farmers of Manitoba and adjacent districts, but also to intending emigrants, who would, by the proposed route, reach their destination earlier and with greater ease and comfort, than if they took their passage *via* Montreal or New York; whilst they would not be exposed to the risk of being induced to

break their journey and settle in the eastern parts of Canada, or perhaps even in the United States, a matter of no slight significance.

It is easy to understand the lukewarmness, not to say opposition, that was displayed to the adoption of the scheme by the eastern cities, and those connected with the new Canadian Pacific Railway. If the proposed line was constructed, it would deprive them of a very large amount of traffic, both of passengers and of cargo, that must now necessarily pass through their country and over their lines of conveyance. The goods required for consumption in the North-West would, if the scheme was carried out, be received direct from England, instead of being supplied by the eastern cities, and of course at very much reduced rates; and they would be deprived of the opportunity of retaining in their own country a certain number of intending emigrants, who would, if left to themselves, with no inducements held out to them to remain, have preferred to settle in the west.

These reasons have, doubtless, influenced the minds of eastern capitalists, and in a

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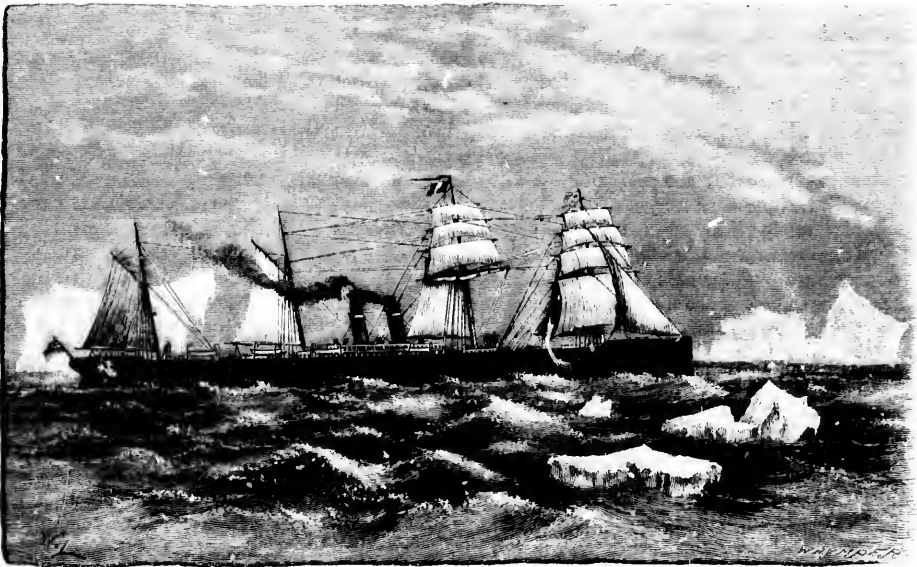
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certain measure, although their integrity of purpose and patriotism is not to be doubted, prejudiced them against the scheme; but these men should not forget that in a young and growing country like Canada, patriotism, to be true, should be regarded in its broadest and most comprehensive sense; the welfare and development of the whole Dominion should be considered, and not be limited solely to provinces and districts, in which those influential men who wield such a power for good or for evil in the State, are pecuniarily interested.

Looking at it from a perfectly impartial point of view, and having very carefully considered the matter on all its bearings, it

appears to me to be an incontrovertible fact, that the establishment of a seaport, some 800 miles nearer to Winnipeg than Montreal (the nearest port at which goods can now be shipped and transhipped), must be of the greatest possible value and importance to the extensive wheat-bearing and cattle-producing country which claims Winnipeg as its mercantile centre.

There seems to be a general consensus of opinion among those who are the most interested in the success, or failure, of the project, namely, the people of Manitoba and the North-West, that a railroad to Hudson's Bay is absolutely necessary, in order to give them an easier, a more expeditious, and a less



The Carthaginian amongst Icebergs.

expensive means of conveyance for their produce than they at present enjoy.

Among those who are opposed to the scheme, and who have systematically thrown cold water upon it, are the majority of the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company. I do not mean to say that all those who are associated with that once powerful and wealthy corporation are averse to the construction of a railway, but the majority of those belonging to that Company, whom it was my pleasure, and privilege, to meet during my recent journey through their districts in the Hudson's Bay territory, took no pains to conceal their aversion to the accomplishment of the undertaking.

They have been so long isolated from the outside world, and are so conservative in their ideas, and are withal so loyal to their employers, that they naturally view with disfavour a scheme, the achievement of which would have the effect of opening up the country and driving the fur-bearing animals, the great source of their profits, to more remote regions.

After all, the only real and sound reason that can be advanced by the opponents of the scheme, is the supposed impracticability of navigating the strait leading into Hudson's Bay for a sufficient time during the year, to make the construction of the railroad a remunerative speculation for the share-

holders. This is the sole contention, but it is a very important one.

Those inimical to the scheme aver that Hudson's Strait is open only for a very short and uncertain period during each year, and that even during that time, the navigation is rendered extremely hazardous, not to say dangerous, on account of the heavy masses of ice with which it is reputed to be choked. Against these assertions and statements, we have it on undoubted authority, that during the last two hundred and seventy years the Strait has been successfully navigated by vessels belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, by men-of-war, by vessels engaged in exploration, and by whalers and other ships, altogether by about seven hundred vessels; that out of this large number the losses have been infinitesimal, whilst the number that have failed to achieve the passage of the Strait, either on the outward or homeward passages, have been very small indeed.

It must be borne in mind that the vessels, to which I am now alluding, were all sailing ships, and that the majority of them were small, frail, and ill found. These vessels invariably made the passage through the Strait during the months of July or August, and sometimes even as early as the month of June. No difficulty, so far as I am aware, has ever been experienced during the return voyage, for ice is rarely met in the Strait so late as October, the month the ships usually select to sail for their homeward journey.

During the latter part of October the young, or what is called pancake, ice begins to form, but although the Strait is clear of ice not infrequently as late as November, it is not advisable, or prudent, for a sailing ship to delay the return voyage later than the latter end of October.

Steam has, however, in the present day entirely revolutionized ice navigation. This was brought very prominently to my notice during a voyage I made to Baffin's Bay and the Gulf of Boothia in 1873, in a steam whaler from Dundee, when in the short period of six months we succeeded in passing positions that had been reached by previous explorers, only after long and weary months of toil and hard work. It was also my privilege to be a witness of the great advantages possessed by a ship with steam power engaged in ice navigation, when I served as Commander of the *Alert* under Sir George Nares in 1875 when, in three short months after our departure from England, we succeeded in reaching the latitude of $82^{\circ} 27' N.$, the highest northern latitude that has ever

been reached, either before or since, by a ship.

It is, therefore, only natural for us to infer that what has been so often successfully accomplished, year after year for more than two centuries, by small and indifferently equipped sailing ships, can be better, and with a greater degree of certainty, achieved by powerful steamers specially constructed for ice navigation. It is also reasonable to assume that with steamers specially adapted for this particular work, the passage through the Strait can be accomplished at an earlier date on the outward voyage from Liverpool, and, inferentially, at a later date on the passage home, than could have been performed by the old sailing vessels.

This, then, was the whole bone of contention, and the matter that was required to be settled was briefly this: Is the Strait open to navigation for a sufficiently long period during the year, as to render it expedient to create a seaport on the shores of Hudson's Bay in direct communication by rail with Winnipeg, or any other large town in the North-West?

I have already stated that the Canadian Government had dispatched a steamer in 1884, for the express purpose of establishing meteorological stations in various positions in the neighbourhood of Hudson's Strait. No less than six of these stations were established, and placed in charge of young Canadian gentlemen who, attracted by the novelty of the duties that would be required of them, as well as by the interest attached to the situation, had volunteered for and received the appointments.

In 1885 the *Alert* was sent up by the Canadian Government with the object of visiting these stations, and also for the purpose of relieving the observers; as it was considered, and very rightly, that a period of twelve months was quite long enough for the men to live in such a rigorous climate, and in such complete isolation from the outward world, for the stations were too far apart for the residents of one to communicate with those at another.

The *Alert*, it will be remembered, was the same vessel that was commanded by Sir George Nares in the Arctic Expedition of 1875-6, and having recently returned from a successful trip to Smith Sound, for the purpose of rescuing Major Greeley and the survivors of the late American Arctic Expedition, had been lent to the Canadian Government by the Admiralty, with a view of being employed on this special service.

As I was on the point of leaving England

I, most opportunely, through the kindness of a friend, made the acquaintance of a Canadian gentleman, a member of the Dominion Parliament, who had come over to this country in the interest of the proposed Hudson's Bay Railway Company. On being informed of my desire to visit Hudson's Bay, he very kindly offered me a passage from Halifax to York Factory in the *Alert*, as he had received permission from the Canadian Government to send one or two representatives of his company in the ship. In return for this permission to take a passage in the *Alert*, all that he stipulated for was that I should, at the termination of my voyage, submit a report to him on the condition of the ice in Hudson's Strait, and my views generally with regard to the feasibility, or otherwise, of navigating the Strait. On arrival at York Factory I should, of course, be at liberty to carry out my proposed trip to Winnipeg in a canoe, or in any other way that I could arrange.

This offer suited me exactly, and I had no hesitation in accepting it. The very idea of again ploughing the icy seas of the north in my old ship, although only as a passenger, was too fascinating and too delightful to be resisted—not only should I be indulging in a most enjoyable holiday, but I felt also that a certain amount of responsibility would be vested in me, and that on my report the question of a Hudson's Bay railroad would be, in a certain degree, for the present decided. In other words, if I could practically demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed route, by travelling in person from the Atlantic through Hudson's Strait and Bay, and thence to Winnipeg, my report, if a favourable one, would materially strengthen the hands of the supporters of the contemplated scheme; whereas if I failed to accomplish the journey satisfactorily, the experience gained might perhaps, I thought, tend to the prevention of a great waste of public and private money, and possibly lead to the avoidance of much bitter disappointment.

It is perhaps needless for me to observe that I was not at any time a paid servant of the company, nor was I in any way interested, either pecuniarily or otherwise, in the success of the project, except in being desirous, as an Englishman, and one who had the welfare and integrity of the empire at heart, of seeing the settlement, and consequent development, of a vast extent of country now lying practically idle belonging to one of our most important colonies.

The time at my disposal for making all

the necessary arrangements for my trip was two short days, and those two short days, unfortunately for me, happened to be a Saturday and a Sunday, so that I had to leave England without being able to provide myself with many things which I considered at the time would be absolutely indispensable. On Monday, June 7, I left London for Liverpool, and on the following day sailed in the Allan steamer *Carthaginian* for Halifax, at which port, I was given to understand, I should find the *Alert*.

Our passage across was an uneventful one, as are, I imagine, the majority of passages in our large ocean steamers. Our passengers were few and sociable, and the weather was comparatively fine and pleasant. The accommodation for passengers, however, was somewhat limited, so it was as well, perhaps, that there were so few on board. The *Carthaginian* was not one of the regular passenger vessels, but had been ordered, somewhat hurriedly, to take the place of a steamer that had been detained for some days in the ice off Newfoundland, and had in consequence failed to arrive in time to take her regular turn. The last service on which she had been employed was that of carrying cattle, and although the animals were not actually on board at the time, a very unmistakable proof of their recent presence was everywhere perceptible. The pungent odours that assailed our olfactory organs in every part of the ship were far from pleasant, but the kindness and attention of our skilful captain made up for much that would otherwise have been considered decidedly disagreeable, and if I had to cross the Atlantic again, and could select my vessel, I should certainly choose the *Carthaginian*, odours notwithstanding, provided she was commanded by her present captain.

The scarcity of animal life on the broad Atlantic has often struck me, and on this particular voyage my previous experience was fully confirmed. Sea birds, both gulls and petrels, were conspicuous by their absence, a more perfect sea of solitude could hardly be imagined; the good ship *Carthaginian* appeared to be the only animate, or inanimate, creature on the vast heaving ocean, and the throbbing of our engines, as they made their never-ceasing revolutions, was the only sound that could be heard on the still, dark nights.

On the 15th a few icebergs were passed, causing a certain amount of excitement among those of our passengers who then, for the first time, gazed on these large glacial

productions, up whose sides the waves were dashing in their incessant exertions to reduce them from their solidified form to their original element. I welcomed them as old friends that had probably been generated in parts of the world that I had visited, and which had in all probability drifted down on the bosom of those waters over which I had already sailed. The very sight of them brought to my mind old and pleasant recollections. Passed as these large floating masses of ice were in apparently mid ocean, in an otherwise perfect sea of solitude, I could not but help being reminded of the

words of the author of the "Paradise of Birds," who says:—

"Here all is ruled by silence far and wide,
Save light waves lapping on the iceberg's side."

St. John's, Newfoundland, was reached on the morning of the 16th. With the exception of the new cathedral, designed by Sir Gilbert Scott, but which, alas! is still incomplete and saddled with a debt of £30,000, there is little of interest to be seen at St. John's. It reminded me somewhat of the most northern town in the world, Hammerfest, for, like it, it had a "very ancient and a fish-like smell!"

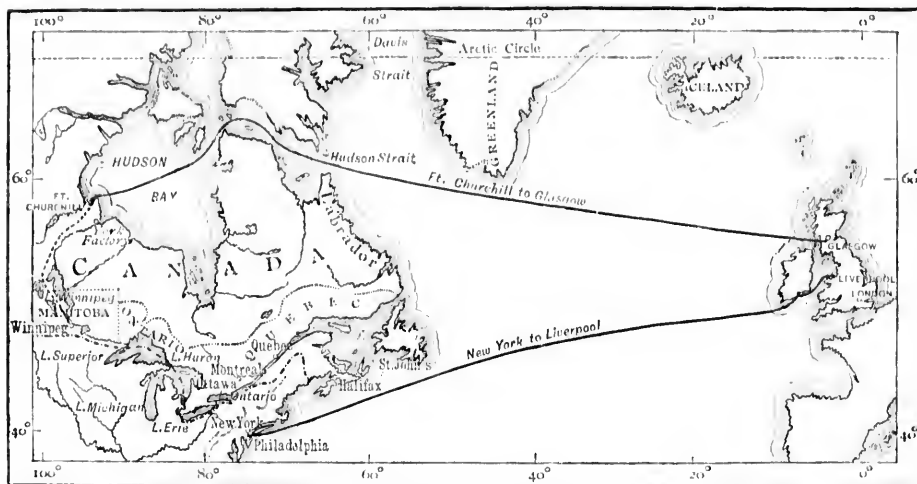


Chart showing the relative position of places referred to.

We left again on the same evening, but were much pestered for many hours with dense fogs, when speed had to be reduced, and occasionally the engines stopped altogether; during this time we were subjected to a hideous din that emanated from the mouth of one of the most discordant steam-whistles it was ever my ill-luck to listen to. It was not until the morning of the 19th that we reached Halifax, when we bade farewell to the *Carthaginian*, sorry to bid adieu to those whose acquaintance we had made on board, but glad to have reached the end of our voyage, and not displeased to part with the smells and noises that were associated with what had been our floating home for the past eleven days!

My first inquiries on landing were for the *Alert*, and on ascertaining her whereabouts, my steps were at once directed towards her.

I found her lying alongside a wharf, with her sails bent and apparently ready for sea. I will not say that she looked as trim as when I last served in her, but she looked quite as capable of receiving hard knocks from that enemy which she had been specially fitted to grapple with and overcome, the ice, and was now only waiting to ship her crew, and receive some new blades for her propeller, before starting on her second voyage to Hudson's Bay. My appearance on board was the first intimation to her commander and officers that I was to accompany them on their forthcoming cruise, but from one and all I had a most friendly and cordial reception. A cabin was allotted to me in the ward-room; and I was informed that the ship would probably put to sea in four or five days, by which time everything would be in readiness for a start.

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say, that the child while on board had been utterly demoralised by the lack of all control over him. His mother was sick in her room, and his father seemed quite to forget that he had children on board. The incautions divine thinking it well to administer a reproof to the child, who had become an awful nuisance to everybody, looked as grave as he could, and observed "My young friend, when I was your age, little boys did not join in the conversation of their elders until they were invited." The reply was instant, and would have been even more crushing but for the fact that the supposed aged one was well under sixty, and did not look his years. But it was straight, and gave much joy. "I guess that was seventy or eighty years ago, you bet." Probably that good man never runs on a child's spear now.

One attractive trait in children must be noticed—their affectionateness. My last incident was of a clergyman coming to grief in subduing a child by deserved sternness. Let me now give a trifling incident which once touched and instructed me, and which in spite of its slightness may be of interest. On the other side of the ocean a body of emigrants had just disembarked from a Liverpool steamer, and were sitting on their baggage waiting for the train to carry them into the distant wilderness. A clergyman was walking about among them with cheery and friendly words. It was a last opportunity of kindness before they parted for ever, and he wished to use it. A little child of three years old was sitting on a box all by itself, watching the bustle with wide-open eyes, and consoling itself with "candy." The clergyman's heart twinkled when he saw it. Perhaps he had little ones of his own at home, and quickly he drew to the child. He talked to the little thing, and then looking for permission from the father close at hand, he kissed the little brow; the other part of the face being in an unpleasant condition from the sugary food. The little heart was touched but not satisfied. It lifted up its lips into the stranger's face as if to say, kiss me here. The reluctance passed, the stranger's eyes were quickly closed, the kiss of peace was given, the little face beamed with content. With this affectionateness, which shows itself in countless ways of tact, and silence, and presence of mind, as the years grow, and the perception of things widens, there is almost always combined a good deal of sensitiveness which, if it is occasionally the better for a somewhat bracing treatment, needs attention and

some sympathy. Their caresses, of which some indeed are not over prodigal (except in such cases as a Scotch girl once brusquely indicated of her little brother, "he is always affectionate when he wants something to eat") should not be repulsed as troublesome, or derided as worthless. The young are soon chilled, and chills harden. Their proposals to assist you in the affairs of life, while sometimes embarrassing, often clumsy, and perhaps more often suggested for want of something else to do, need not be hustled away as a housemaid's broom sweeps out cobwebs. Their little presents, often, just from want of thought, not quite as useful as they might be, should be made much of and put away with care. Children no doubt (like other people) derive much satisfaction from receiving presents; they have quite as much in giving them. It is a good habit to encourage, for selfishness is every one's foe, and the foe that may be scotched but never killed. There cannot be too much tenderness, which need not mean softness. All living things grow best at first in a warm temperature. To love need not mean to indulge; nay, some of the roughest-mannered and most firmly ruling parents I have ever known have been those who were simply wild with alarm if the children were ill, and would readily, even cheerfully, have died for them.

The last trait I will notice is simplicity, often frank in its way of expressing itself, and sometimes on the verge of what may easily degenerate into a smart rudeness. No one has written with more freshness or sympathy on the matter than Mr. Stopford Brooke in his sermon on "Child Life." Freedom of talk, and even of criticism, should not be too roughly checked. With all their fond devotedness children often absolutely decline to read their father's writings even when illustrated; sometimes are heard to express their opinion that their sermons are long—a pertness which should instantly be sat upon, and perhaps followed with a distinct request for an analysis of the discourse to be written out at once. On the whole, it is better to train than to prune, though sometimes pruning is quite indispensable. Of course, if simplicity is affected it is odious. In all its natural, piquant, and transparent beauty, it is surely among the childlike qualities which are worthy of imitation by those who have ceased to be children, and about which One, Who loved children, once said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (*To be continued.*)

THROUGH HUDSON'S STRAIT AND BAY.

A Global Officer's Holiday Trip.

By COMMODORE A. H. MARKHAM, R.N.

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT FROZEN SEA," ETC.

PART II.

ON the afternoon of the 24th June, I found myself once more on board the old *Alert*, and, as in days of yore, bound to "unpathed waters, undreamed shores."

A dreamy, misty future lay before me, whilst a somewhat exciting, but refreshing uncertainty pervaded my mind, regarding the result of my enterprise.

The familiar sound of the engines as we steamed out of Halifax harbour, reminded me of many an anxious, as also many a happy, day spent in the old ship, but there, alas! all similitude ceased, and I was reminded of my position by seeing the blue ensign of the Dominion of Canada flying from the peak, where fluttered, in by-gone days, our own grand white ensign; thus forcibly bringing to my mind the fact that I was only a passenger, and that the *Alert* had fallen from the high place she once occupied on the list of the Royal Navy, and must now be regarded simply in the light of an ordinary vessel belonging to the mercantile marine of Canada, and acting under the orders of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries for the Government of that colony.

The first three or four days at sea were not comfortable ones. A strong head wind was blowing, accompanied by an unpleasant confused sea in which the *Alert*, always noted for her particularly lively qualities, tumbled about considerably, added to which we were enveloped in a dense fog, and experienced much rain. The 29th, however, was fine and clear, and we were able to make good progress, steaming through the Strait of Belleisle, and leaving the coast of Newfoundland, the land, as one of my messmates, a native of the country, irreverently informed me, of dogs, fogs, and cod-fish, far behind us.

Whilst steaming through the Strait we passed several fishing boats pursuing their ordinary avocations, off a small fishing and trading station on the coast of Labrador, called Blanc Sablon. As this would be the last opportunity that we should have of communicating with our friends, letters were hurriedly written, and a small mail bag was sent to one of these boats, with a request that

it might be put on board the first homeward bound steamer that passed.

On the same evening we passed a remarkable-looking flat-topped hill called the Devil's Dining-table, and on the following day rounded the most eastern point of Labrador, and shaped a course to the northward.

Icebergs innumerable lay stranded along the shore, some of them of very large dimensions, and birds, peculiar to the northern regions, flew around. Amongst them I noticed my old friends the looms and fulmar petrels, as well as skuas and puffins, the latter in countless numbers, and so fat as to be hardly able to fly.

Already we had experienced a marked change in the temperature, the thermometer during the six days that had elapsed since we left Halifax having fallen nearly 30°, viz. from 66° to 37°. At midnight there was a brilliant display of aurora to the northward; it was so bright that, although the sun had set nearly three hours before, small print was distinctly legible on the upper deck by its light. The colours were of a bright orange and violet, and the coruscations were exceedingly brilliant. Luminous streamers shot up, at intervals, vertically from the horizon to the zenith, lasting several seconds and then gradually fading away. Altogether it was one of the finest auroræ I had ever seen.

The 2nd of July gave the uninitiated on board the *Alert* their first experience of a real Arctic day, with its most unpleasant and disagreeable accompaniments, namely wind, cold, snow and ice, for the morning was ushered in by a stiff northerly gale, snow was falling, the weather was gloomy and misty, and the ship was surrounded by loose drifting ice, whilst the temperature was down to freezing point. Coleridge surely had in his imagination such a scene as that on which we gazed on the morning of the 2nd of July, when he wrote—

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice mast-high came sailing by
As green as emerald."

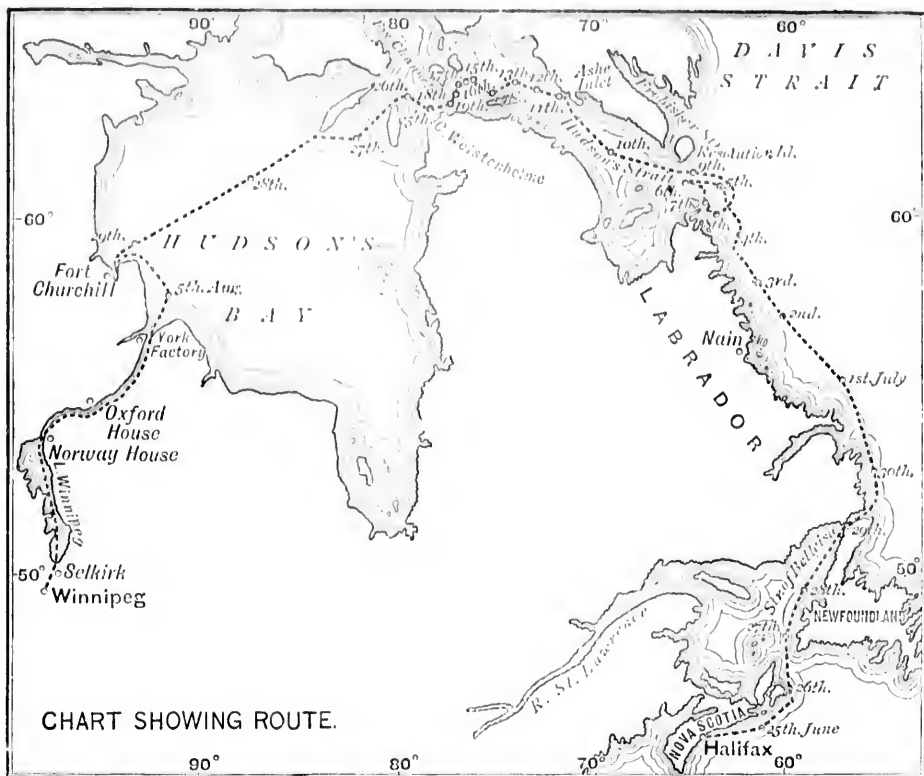
One of the icebergs that we passed was estimated to be at least 200 feet in height, and half a mile in length; a magnificent, noble

fellow, whose summit towered over the tops of all adjacent bergs. It must, indeed, have been of enormous dimensions when it was originally separated from its parent glacier, to float, as a fragmentary piece of ice, down to the warmer waters of the south.

It was a grand sight to witness the blue waves dashing up in their headlong career against the crystal sides of the bergs, apparently intent on overwhelming them with their irresistible force, expending their energies in their first furious but impotent assault,

and then falling back, broken and subdued, to mingle again with their own element, ready to renew the attack with redoubled energy and strength.

Our ship, rigging, masts, and yards were all covered with snow and frost-rime, reminding me very much of little toy vessels that are sometimes seen decorating the tops of Christmas cakes. Altogether, our surroundings presented a very cheerless and wintry appearance, which was enhanced by the bitter cold wind that was blowing.



On the following day, however, everything appeared to have undergone a complete change, and enabled us to enjoy, what I may call, a real Arctic day in its most agreeable and acceptable aspect. A bright sun shone down upon us out of a perfectly clear and cloudless sky; there was a crispy, healthy feeling about the air as we inhaled it when we went on deck; the ship lazily rocked, almost imperceptibly, on the surface of a smooth and nearly quiescent sea of a deep blue colour, whilst around us floated innumerable pieces of ice, of quaint and fan-

tastic forms, resembling, more than anything else, colossal swans disporting themselves on the bosom of some inland lake.

A truly fine day in the northern regions—and a fine day is by no means exceptional—is really very enjoyable; and following, as it invariably does, after dirty weather, is all the more thoroughly appreciated.

About twenty miles off, with its outline conspicuously defined against the clear blue sky beyond, was the coast of Labrador, a bleak and inhospitable-looking country, the utter sterility of which appeared its most no-

ticeable feature; the summits of the hills and the valleys were still retaining their wintry garb of snow. The view that we obtained of it reminded me very much of the southern coast of Greenland, the barrenness and "loathsomeness" of which induced sturdy old John Davis to name it the Land of Desolation. As we passed along the land, the distant hills—especially those far inland—were much distorted by mirage, and assumed all sorts of curious shapes, many having the appearance of being drawn up into the sky, with no visible connection between their summits and their bases.

Although surrounded by loose sailing ice, we experienced no difficulty in threading our way through it; and, with the exercise of a little care, we were able to avoid coming into contact with the heavier submerged pieces that were occasionally met.

A great deal of the ice that we passed was of a very dirty colour; some pieces were almost black, as if covered with earth. This discoloured ice is called by the whalers "foxy ice," the discolouration being probably caused by dust, &c., blown over it from the shore. If this is a true explanation, its presence so far to seaward would tend to show an early disruption of the pack, for the discoloured ice that we met, we must infer, was the ice that was adhering to the land during the winter, and, consequently, the last to break adrift in the spring.

There is, however, another theory regarding the discolouration of this ice, and that is that it may be due to the presence of diatoms, or some other infusoria in the water prior to congelment. It is well known that medusae form the principal food of the whale, and its presence is always known by the inky darkness of the water. Whalers invariably search for what they call the "black water," knowing well that whales are sure to be found in its neighbourhood; so that this water, being frozen, may also account for the discolouration of the ice we saw. I am, however, in favour of the first-named theory, namely, that the discolouration is due to dirt and dust blown from the shore on to the pack.

On the morning of the 4th of July, being abreast of Nachvak Inlet, on the coast of Labrador, near which is established a post of the Hudson's Bay Company, an attempt was made to enter, but the ice was found to be so tightly packed close into the shore, that it was deemed undesirable to persevere in our endeavours to get in, as we could only have done so at the expense of much coal—a very precious article when

the supply is limited—so the attempt was abandoned, and we proceeded on our way northwards.

During the day we saw a large number of walruses in herds, varying from three to six in each, lying dreamily basking in the sun, on small pieces of ice, but being Sunday, no attempt was made to molest them. A few seals were also seen close alongside in the water, staring at us inquisitively with their large, beautiful eyes, and with a decidedly human expression on their wistful faces; but they, likewise, and for the same reason, were not molested.

Another brilliant display of aurora was seen during the evening. On this occasion it took the form of an irregular arch along the eastern sky. Near to the horizon the colour was of a deep orange, blending gradually into a rich gold. The greatest intensity of brilliancy was along the top of the arch. No streamers were visible, but vivid luminous patches would suddenly appear in the heavens near the zenith, and then fade gradually away. These luminous patches occasionally seen with aurora are, I think, the same so frequently alluded to by the old navigators as the "pettie dancers."

For the next four days our progress was sadly interfered with, and our movements much hampered, by ice and fog. Either one of these enemies to navigation is bad enough by itself, but when combined they form serious obstacles to progression. We were certainly most unfortunate in our weather when we reached the neighbourhood of the entrance to Hudson's Strait, for had it not been for the heavy snowstorms and dense fog that prevailed, we should have thought but little of the ice by which we were surrounded; prudence and discretion, however, were prominent characteristics connected with the navigation of the *Alert*, and they prompted a delay until clear weather should reveal the dangers to be encountered. Spenser's lines in the "Faerie Queen" were very applicable to ourselves:—

"Therout they greatly were dismayed, ne wist
How to direct their way in darkness wide,
But feared to wander in that wasteful mist,
For tumbling into mischief's unspede,
Worse is the danger hidden then descide."

As it was, we very nearly "tumbled into mischief," for suddenly, during a brief interval, the boom of land was seen indistinctly for a moment close to, and in an unexpected quarter, and we had no little difficulty in boring our way through the ice in an opposite direction to the land, until we had placed a considerable distance between ourselves and

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the rocks! We had been drifted in by the uncertain currents and eddyings which are well known to exist, and which have given to the entrance of the Strait an unenviable reputation by the mariners of old, who frequently observed curious tumultuous commotions in the waters in that locality.

Although the ice by which we were surrounded was of a soft and brashy nature, and of such a consistency that a powerful steamer could easily have forced her way through, we were several times helplessly beset by it, and on one occasion, in the middle of the night, the ice was squeezing so tightly and with such pressure, that it piled up around the ship as high as the bulwarks. To sleep was out of the question, for although there was no real danger, the noise produced by the soft ice being pulverised against the ship's side so resembled the cracking and groaning of our own timbers, that it was difficult to believe that the ship herself was not being smashed up!

On deck the scene was wild and dismal. The wind was howling through the rigging, snow was falling heavily, and the ship was entirely surrounded by ice; whilst the noise of the ice, as it was broken by the irresistible pressure of the pack, mingled with the howling of the gale that was raging, was so great that it was absolutely impossible to hear people speaking close alongside:—

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled and roared and howled
Like noises in a swound."

It must not be imagined that, during the four days we were detained off the entrance to the Strait, our detention was caused by ice, for such was not the case. Frequently during the day the pack would loosen, and leave us in a large expanse of water, with broad lanes radiating in all directions through the ice, but we were unable to avail ourselves of these opportunities to proceed, in consequence of the fogs and thick weather that prevailed.

I must not omit to mention that it was during this detention that our first Polar bear was seen and killed.

Great was the excitement caused by the report that a bear, a real live Polar bear, was actually in sight. Although it was four o'clock in the morning, the deck was soon crowded with would-be slayers, who, rifle in hand and scantily attired (in spite of the temperature being at, or below, freezing-point), were eagerly inquiring, in the wildest state of excitement, the whereabouts of their intended victim. Poor Bruin was all this time lying unconcern-

edly on a piece of ice, probably asleep and dreaming of some nice fat seal on which he would break his fast on awakening. Suddenly he awoke, and appearing to realize the danger to which he was exposed, took one long, anxious look at the uncanny monster which was steaming towards him at full speed, then plunging into the sea, he endeavoured to make good his escape by swimming.

This was the signal for attack, when a tremendous fusillade was opened on the wretched animal from the ship. The shots were wild, as must always be the case when rapid, indiscriminate shooting is resorted to, for everybody, hoping that his shot might be the lucky one, and that he might have the reputation of being the "Bear-slayer," fired, without wasting much time to take aim.

During all this time those on board the ship were placed in as much jeopardy from the unskilfulness of the marksmen, and their inexperience in the use of fire-arms, as was the object of their particular attentions, and it was more by good luck than good management that no accident occurred. At length, after the bombardment had lasted many minutes, during which time the ship was chasing the bear at full speed, crashing into the ice that lay in its path, regardless of everything but the capture of the animal, a shot struck poor Bruin in the shoulder, causing him to plunge and kick violently, and to snap his jaws viciously above water. A boat was then lowered, when the poor beast received his *quietus*, though not before half-a-dozen more shots were fired at it.

Two mornings after, as our men jumped on to the floe from the bowsprit in order to secure the ship to the ice, they unceremoniously disturbed the slumbers of another bear, who was peacefully sleeping behind the very hummocks to which the men were ordered to make the lines fast. It is difficult to say which were the most alarmed on finding themselves in such close proximity to each other, the men, or Bruin whose repose was so suddenly and disagreeably disturbed. The former retreated to the ship, and hurriedly scrambled up the side, whilst the bear scampered off as fast as its legs could carry it, until stopped by the bullets from the rifles of our marksmen.

We were now in the enjoyment of perpetual day, or perhaps I shall be more correct in saying perpetual daylight; the sun remaining above the horizon until past 10 P.M., and rising again shortly before two in the morning; during the interval of its absence there was always a good twilight. Arctic navi-

gation would be very hazardous, indeed be almost impossible, without the continuous daylight that is experienced during the navigable season in those regions.

After being enveloped in fog for a period of four days, fortune, and the sun, at last smiled on us, the weather cleared, and on the 9th of July we passed Cape Chidley, and entered the Strait without let or hindrance from ice. As the fog cleared away a most encouraging sight was revealed, namely, a broad expanse of blue water, extending as far as we could see in every direction, with only a few straggling pieces of ice, dotted here and there on its surface. In this clear water we steamed along gaily, and such good progress did we make that by noon the following day, we had penetrated into the Strait a distance of one hundred and thirty miles.

As we proceeded to the westward our compasses became visibly affected, and worked so sluggishly as to be hardly reliable; this loss of sensitiveness was due to the influence exerted on them by our proximity to the North Magnetic Pole, towards the neighbourhood of which we were rapidly approaching.

On the evening of the 10th, our progress was somewhat checked off the middle Savage Islands by an accumulation of ice, but so loosely packed that we experienced but little difficulty in effecting a passage through. Although these islands are so named on our modern charts, they were really named by Henry Hudson, who discovered them in 1610, the "Isles of God's Mercie." Their original name, which should undoubtedly be retained, will I hope be restored to them in all future issues of the chart of these regions.

It having been decided to call at North Bluff, on the northern side of the Strait, (where one of the meteorological stations had been established), for the purpose of taking on board the gentleman who had been placed in charge of the station, a course was shaped with that object, and early on the morning of the 11th we dropped anchor in a snug little bay named Ashe Inlet, in sight of the station house which had been erected two years previously.

The station hands were not long before they made their appearance on board, in fact, were alongside long before the anchor was let go, delighted at seeing the ship again, after their long isolated sojourn



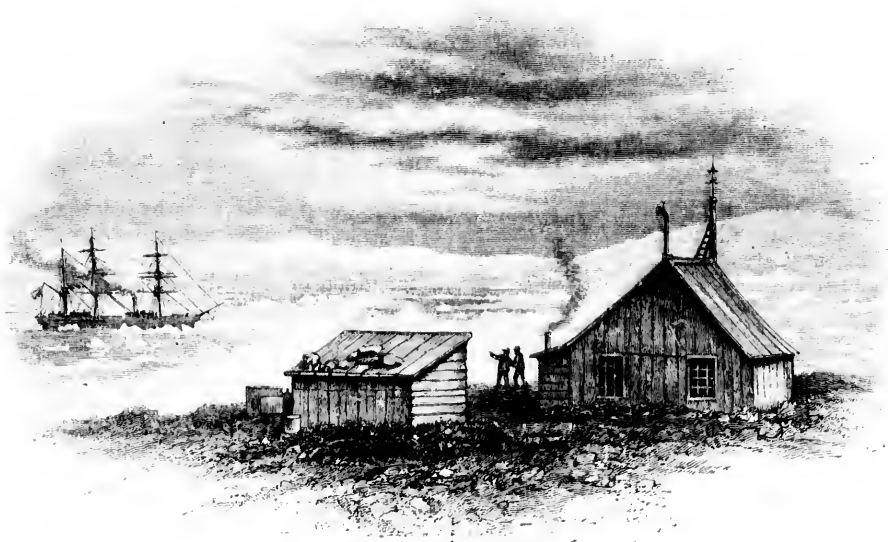
On the Coast of Labrador.

away from the civilised world. They were in perfect health, and had spent a pleasant and, comparatively, happy winter. So well had they been supplied by the Eskimos with

reindeer meat, that they turned up their noses at some fresh beef that we proposed to send on shore for their consumption, remarking that we had better keep it for ourselves!

All that they required was a little preserved milk and butter, and, of course, tobacco. The lowest temperature recorded by them during the winter was 40° below zero. The

ice, we were told, did not form in the Strait before December, and it was considered that the channel was perfectly free for navigation during the entire month of November. Two



Meteorological Station, Ashe Inlet.

families of Eskimos had settled down close to the station-house, and had there wintered. They were of the greatest service to the station, supplying them with fresh meat besides skin clothing, &c.

At the time of our visit, these children of the soil had removed from their winter habitations to their summer tents, which latter were made of seal-skins, sewn together and spread out on wooden poles. Their dress was identical with that described by Sir Edward Parry sixty years ago, which shows that among these simple people fashions do not alter so rapidly as they do with the more highly civilized inhabitants of the globe. They appeared perfectly happy and contented; had fat, round, flabby, and good-natured faces, but were all excessively dirty, whilst the odour peculiar to these people was quite as perceptible, and as pungent, as I have found it to be with those Eskimos whom I have met in much higher northern latitudes. One of the women had the lower part of her face tattooed in straight horizontal lines. They were in possession of three kayaks* and a

* A kayak is a canoe covered with skin, and so light that a man can easily carry it on his head. The Eskimos are very expert and skilful in the handling of these boats.

few dogs, but the latter seemed to me to be inferior in size and strength to those of Greenland.

Game appeared to be plentiful in the neighbourhood of the station. Numerous herds of reindeer were met with during the winter, and hares were reported as abundant on an adjacent island, whilst bears, seals, and walrus were frequently seen.

Tied up outside the house was a wolf's whelp, which had been captured about a fortnight prior to our arrival, its mother having been shot by one of the natives. I was informed that it was getting quite tame, but from its wild and frantic attempts to escape, and its vicious endeavours to bite when it was approached, I could not help thinking it was a very long way from domestication.

We only remained at Ashe Inlet a couple of hours, which was all the time required by the gentleman in charge of the station to pack up his belongings and come off to the ship. His presence on board was a very pleasant and agreeable acquisition to our small party in the *Alert*.

On leaving Ashe Inlet it was our intention to have gone across the Strait, for the purpose

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of visiting another station that had been established on the south side of the channel, but after proceeding for about seven miles in that direction, we were mortified to find the streams of ice packed so tightly together, that we could only have penetrated them at the expense of much valuable time and fuel; the attempt was therefore abandoned, and a course was shaped to the westward.

But, alas! no better prospect of advancement appeared in this direction, for here also we were met by a barrier of ice extending, apparently, right across the Strait. The sight was not an inspiring one, but, like all difficulties, it was more formidable in appearance than in reality, and although the ice, our implacable enemy, was apparently consolidated into one large field, it was never so tightly packed as to prevent progress, however slow, being made through it.

At periodical intervals during the day, when the ice would be affected by the tide, the pack would loosen considerably, thereby enabling us to make fairly good progress, but at other times, on account of the want of sufficient power on board the *Alert* to force her through the pack, we would remain for hours stationary, helplessly beset by the ice. A more powerful steamer, specially constructed for ice navigation, would, however, have experienced no difficulty in making continuous progress through the ice that we encountered, and although her rate of progression might not have been particularly rapid, she would have succeeded in accomplishing the passage of the Strait in far less time, and with greater ease, than a vessel with such little steam-power as that possessed by the *Alert*. As it was, we were no less than nine days pushing and boring our way through the Strait, during which time our average daily rate of progress was only thirty miles!

The pack that so impeded our advance was by no means of a formidable nature; it was what might be called a broken-up pack, consisting of a number of small pieces of soft ice, varying in size from about three to fifteen yards across their greatest breadth, and composed of what is termed brashy, or rotten, ice. This appears to me to be a special peculiarity of the character of the pack in Hudson's Strait, and it is one that I have not seen before in other parts of the northern regions.

This peculiar composition is a very important feature, and it is one that should not be disregarded when the navigation of the Strait is under consideration, for it has the effect of depriving the pack of its

powers to seriously injure any ship that may be beset in it, the small soft pieces acting as cushions between the ship and larger pieces of ice, and thus preventing the vessel from being violently squeezed. Occasionally heavier pieces of ice, partaking of the nature of floes, were seen, but they were few and far between, and with a little care and caution were easily avoided. This ice that we had to contend with was, in all probability, that formed in Fox Channel, and which had gradually drifted down into Hudson Strait on the general disruption of the pack in the summer.

Surrounded as we were by ice, the effects of the mirage were occasionally very curious and very striking. Sometimes a huge wall of ice would be created, drawn up many feet above our horizon, resembling a solid stone structure, barring our way across the Strait. On one occasion an island, some twenty-five miles off, was entirely hidden from our view by the ice being refracted up into the semblance of a wall between ourselves and the island. The mirage would then suddenly be dissipated, when the island would immediately appear as if by magic. Perhaps this sudden appearance and disappearance would take place a dozen times in as many minutes.

No icebergs were seen after leaving Ashe Inlet, from which it is reasonable to infer that all those met with to the eastward in Hudson's Strait, were the productions of glaciers to the northward, and that there are few, if any, discharging glaciers in the Strait itself.

During the time that we were slowly and tediously working our way through the ice, the mainland to the southward, as far as Cape Wolstenholme, with Nottingham and Salisbury Islands to the westward, were in full view, but so distant as to render it impossible for us to distinguish bays, capes, or even any inequalities in the coastline. It all looked black and sombre, affording a striking contrast to the white, icy wilderness by which we were more immediately surrounded.

It was very aggravating sometimes to be stopped perhaps by only a small neck of ice, which we had not the power to break, and yet to see lanes of water existing on the opposite side. Of course efforts were constantly being made to get through, and it was particularly fascinating to watch the ship from aloft, threading her way through the small, rubbly pieces of ice, sometimes coming into violent contact with an unusually heavy piece that was partially submerged, which would have the effect of bringing the ship to a dead stop,

or, if it struck her broadside, perhaps make her "cant" a heavy piece on the opposite side, and the ship heretofore, the violence of the shock.

Our progress was, however, impeded by the smaller pieces, which, filling up the water, impeding round the ship, which offered much opposition to the larger floes, although some were apparently of deep immersion, were of decay, and were quite unmanageable. These invariably came on being struck by the ship. At length, on the evening of July, after battling with the ice for eight days, we succeeded

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within five miles of the Digges Islands, on
the most western of which was established
one of the meteorological stations that we
were desirous of visiting. Our approach had
evidently been observed, for, with our tele-
scopes, we were able to distinguish some of
the men on one of the highest hills anxiously
awaiting our arrival. It was not, however,
until the next morning that we succeeded in
getting clear of the pack, and shortly after-
wards dropped our anchor in front of the
station house in a sheltered little bay called
Laperriere Harbour, in the western Digges
Island; here we proposed to remain for a
few days, in order to give the machinery a
thorough overhaul, for we had been constantly
under steam since our departure from Hal-
ifax, and even engines require rest and re-
pose!

THROUGH

AFTER our close confinement on the ship for a period of several weeks, the enjoyment of a run on a good scramble over the hills of Island was much appreciated.

The island consists of a series of gneiss hills, rising to an altitude of five hundred feet; these are separated by broad valleys, the major ones at right angles with each other. The hills are covered with moss and a coarse description of vegetation, pleasant and soft for the touch, but otherwise the hills are atrocious, either in a soft texture or on sharp-edged stones and rocks. Raised beaches were observable on the coast, whilst distinct marks of erosion were everywhere perceptible on the rocks on the hills.

Although I succeeded in gathering some flowers belonging to the Arctic region, the vegetation compared most unfavorably with that of some of the small islands I have landed off the coast of Newfoundland, and which, although situated at a higher northern latitude, are in the summer months, covered with a luxuriant vegetation.

The men at the station were delighted to see us; they had been comparatively comfortable winter months, the conditions being very similar to those experienced at Ashe Inlet.

Periodical visits had been paid to the island by the natives of the land, who came across on the

THROUGH HUDSON'S STRAIT AND BAY.

PART III.

ER our close confinement on board the ship for a period of nearly four months, the enjoyment of a run on shore, and a scramble over the hills on Digges Island was much appreciated.

the island consists of a series of bare hills, rising to an altitude of about one hundred feet; these are intersected by deep valleys, the majority running at right angles with each other, and carpeted with moss and a coarse description of grass, soft and soft for the feet where it is, but otherwise the walking was tiresome, either in a soft tenacious soil, or over sharp-edged stones and rugged rocks. Beaches were observed along the coast, whilst distinct marks of glaciation were everywhere perceptible on the gneiss in the hills.

Although I succeeded in gathering several plants belonging to the Arctic flora, the collection compared most unfavourably with some of the small islands on which are stranded off the coast of Novaya Zemlya, which, although situated in a much more northern latitude, are, during the summer months, covered with a really rich and luxuriant vegetation.

The Eskimo men at the station were, of course, glad to see us; they had passed a completely comfortable winter, their experience being very similar to those of the men who had been at Ashe Inlet.

Medical visits had been paid them during the winter by the natives from the mainland, who came across on their dog sledges

from Cape Wolstenholme, bringing large supplies of venison and skins, which they would traffic for tobacco, powder, shot, or anything else they thought might be useful to them.

During these visits they would remain encamped, in close proximity to the station-house, until all their goods had been disposed of, or until they saw there was nothing further to be obtained from the white men. On these occasions, if any of the Eskimos were suffering from sickness or were at all indisposed, they usually consulted the gentleman in charge of the station, who would invariably prescribe some remedy for the suffering one. Once a baby was brought to him, evidently reduced to a very low state from the want of sufficient nourishment; immediately realizing the nature of the ailment, a large syringe was procured from the medicine-chest, and "warm tea and milk was," I was informed, "squirted down the baby's throat until it fairly ran over!" The remedy, although an apparently severe one, was, I believe, efficacious, for under this treatment the baby thrived wonderfully, but we will hope that the poor little thing was not filled up to overflowing each time the prescription was administered.

On another occasion, an old woman, who had been long ailing, was brought to the station-house for treatment. The case was a difficult one, for the illness was, to all appearance, old age and exhausted nature. In this dilemma "Pain Killer" was prescribed,

doses of which were administered both externally and internally. This case terminated less successfully than that of the baby, for after a course of three weeks of the above-mentioned treatment, the old lady died. Let us hope the "Pain Killer" did not accelerate her end! After death the body was sewn up in deer-skins, a hole was then made at the back of the "igloo," or house, dogs were harnessed to the corpse, and it was dragged out through the extemporised opening, and deposited on the snow on the opposite side of the harbour. The remains were subsequently, after the departure of the natives, properly and decently interred by the men at the station.

The Eskimos of Hudson's Strait have a great horror and repugnance to touch a human corpse, and will not permit one to be removed from a house through the regular entrance; a special door must therefore be made, temporarily, at the back of the house before the remains can be taken out for interment.

At the station was a hen which had been left there by the *Alert* during her visit the previous year. Strange to say, during the winter she laid no less than sixty eggs! She was, of course, carefully looked after, and kept in-doors during the cold weather. A few days prior to our arrival, a couple of eggs, which had been found in the nest of a loon, or great northern diver (*Colymbus glaucialis*), had been put under this hen, which at once sat upon them. In five days two little loons were hatched, but, alas, they only survived their arrival in this world a few days; their death being probably due to the inability of the old hen to furnish them with suitable food.

On the first day that I landed on the island, the weather being cold and cloudy, I observed the water round the banks of the ponds and lakes covered with a black film, which, on closer examination, I found to be myriads of mosquitoes, lying on the surface of the water in a kind of torpor, or suspended animation, requiring, apparently, only a bright sun to restore them to life and vigour. Unfortunately for us, the sun, on the following day, shone out bright and warm; this had the desired effect, and we were soon made sensible of the presence of swarms of these noxious little insects. I never met with such voracious and insatiable mosquitoes in all my life; no place was secure from their persecutions; the ship swarmed with them; in spite of hatchways and skylights being closed, they found their way into our cabins, whence it was almost impossible to

dislodge them, although the burning of brown paper, and other devices to get rid of them, were resorted to.

"A cloud of sumbrous gnats doe him molest,
All striving to indue their feeble stings;
That from their noyance he nowhere can rest."

If Spenser had been writing his "Faerie Queene" at Digges Island, he never would have alluded to the stings as being "feeble;" but bad as the mosquitoes were in this place, it was my misfortune to find them ten thousand times more exasperating, before I reached the end of my journey! But I must not anticipate; "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof!"

The machinery having been overhauled, and our stock of fresh water replenished, we bade farewell to the station hands, directing them to be ready to be taken on board the *Alert* on her return voyage in about six weeks' time, and steamed out of harbour on the 25th of July.

Prior to our departure we had obtained, from the summit of one of the hills, a good view of the Bay and Strait, and were much gratified to see that the ice was loose, and that there was much water. It was therefore all the more mortifying to find, after we got away, that the fine expanse of water that we had seen had disappeared, and that its place was occupied by broad streams of ice, so tightly packed as to materially interfere with our progress. However, by dint of a little perseverance, and pushing on whenever opportunities offered, we succeeded on the following morning in getting clear of the pack, and emerged suddenly upon an open sea, with only a few stray pieces of ice scattered here and there.

The rapid transition from our icy thralldom to freedom, on a perfectly clear sheet of water, was almost miraculous. When clear of the pack we were only seven miles from Digges Islands, yet it had taken us nearly thirty hours to accomplish that distance!

Here ended all our difficulties, so far as the ice was concerned; the passage of the Strait had been accomplished, and the open, ice-unencumbered water of Hudson's Bay had been reached, and although a few straggling streams of ice were subsequently seen, they were so loose that they in no way interfered with our progress, nor had the course of the ship ever to be altered for the purpose of avoiding coming into contact with them.

Passing between Mansell and Southampton Islands, under steam and sail, with a fine fresh breeze, we steered to the southward, having decided upon visiting the Hudson's

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Bay post at Port Churchill, on the west side of the Bay.

During the last few hours that we spent in the ice no less than five Polar bears were seen, and four killed. The two last that were slaughtered were a mother and its cub: they were first seen in the water, when the ship, of course, gave chase, steaming after them at full speed. When aware of their danger it was touching to witness the solicitude which the parent evinced for its young, actually taking it on its back and swimming with it for some distance, until, in fact, both were shot.

Bear-killing in the water is no sport, and but cruel work at the best. When on the ice, where they have an opportunity of escaping, or defending themselves, the case is very different; but in the water they are absolutely helpless, and at the mercy of the so-called sportsman.

As we proceeded to the southward the temperature rose steadily, and everything betokened our approach to more hospitable and genial climes; the days began to draw in perceptibly, and there was a corresponding increase in the length of the nights; lamps and candles below also became a necessity after eight p.m.

On the afternoon of the 29th of July, we steamed into Churchill harbour, and dropped anchor in this fine land-locked haven, off a small pier that had been constructed for convenience in shipping, and disembarking goods and commodities that are received for, and from, the vessel belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company that annually visits the port.

Port Churchill, as also York and Moose Factories situated farther to the southward, were, at one time, three of the most important posts belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, for it was to these places that the goods from nearly all the other posts situated in the Hudson's Bay Territory were forwarded by boats and canoes, ready for transshipment to the annual packet from England. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway has, however, effected an alteration in the transport arrangements of the company, and the greater part of the peltries are now forwarded direct to Winnipeg, and thence to Europe; it is only those stations that are in the immediate neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay, that now send their commodities to York Factory, Moose Factory, and Churchill, as heretofore.

The annual voyages of the ships, from England to these posts, have been carried out

with surprising regularity, and it was very rarely indeed that the vessels ever failed to make the passage through the Strait.

In the official records kept by the company, it appears that Moose Factory has been visited by a ship regularly every year since 1735, with but one exception, namely, in 1779, when the vessel failed to get through the Strait.

In consequence of the value and importance of these stations, it was considered necessary, during the last century, to construct strong forts, in order to afford protection in the event of an attack being made upon them by an enemy.

The idea of an enemy's fleet overcoming the difficulties of ice navigation and forcing its way through the Strait into the Bay, seems almost incredible; yet Hudson's Bay has been the scene of many a sanguinary engagement between the French and English. There is a very interesting account existing of an action that was fought between H.M.S. *Hampshire* and some French men-of-war. During the height of the battle the ice intervened and separated the combatants. After a little time they succeeded in working clear of the ice, when the fight was resumed, but, it is recorded, that "by some unlucky accident," the *Hampshire* overset and all on board perished.

Fort Prince of Wales, specially built for the defence of Churchill, was a massive construction, built of large blocks of granite, and in accordance with the most approved plans of fortification existent in those days, being of quadrangular form with projecting bastions at each angle. It was commenced in 1733, but occupied many years in building. It occupies a very commanding position at the western entrance of the harbour, and is reported to have had as many as forty guns mounted on its walls, which latter were over ten feet in thickness. In the centre of the fort were the quarters for the officers and men. In spite of its apparent impregnability it was surrendered to La Perouse in 1782, without firing a shot!

When I visited the fort (for the walls are still standing and the whole structure is in a fair state of preservation) I was astonished at the massive solidity of its construction. I counted eighteen old guns, 24-pounders, lying about in a more or less damaged condition, the majority with their trunnions knocked off, all bearing date of George II. The fort could very easily be put in an efficient state of defence, if required. There was also a battery on the eastern side of the

harbour, which assisted to command the approach to it.

The post (as all the Hudson's Bay Company's stations are termed) at Churchill, is situated at the head of the harbour, and at about four miles from its entrance. It consists of about a dozen houses, built of wood, and all in a more or less dilapidated condition. In general appearance, tidiness, and cleanliness, the stations that I visited in the Hudson's Bay territory compare very unfavourably with the Danish settlements in Greenland, which are all patterns of neatness and good order.

The post comprises the chief trader's house, a small one for his assistant, a magazine, a long rambling, tumble-down shanty for the employés, whilst the remainder of the buildings are used as store-houses, issue-house, oil and skin houses. There is also a small corrugated-iron church, about twenty feet long by fifteen feet in breadth, which was sent out at the expense of, and erected by, the Church Missionary Society. The clergyman and his wife had only been there a few days when we arrived, and as there was no other accommodation, he was compelled to take up his residence in the church until a house could be built for him.

Churchill is in the diocese of the Bishop of Moosenee, who resides at Moose Factory, at the southern extremity of Hudson's Bay. There are five other missionaries under his lordship's episcopal jurisdiction. I am afraid these gentlemen, who are really doing good work amongst the Indians, do not receive all the support that might be desired from some of the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company, and many are the complaints of the obstacles which have, systematically, been thrown in their way by the servants of the company, but whether acting under superior authority or not it is, of course, impossible for me to say.

I can, however, speak from personal experience regarding the unnecessary difficulties that have been made by the Hudson's Bay officials, who are all-powerful in their districts, with respect to the erection of a house for the clergyman at Churchill, and when I ventured to remonstrate against the unkindliness and want of sympathy evinced, I was told, in plain words, that a missionary at the post was not wanted, and that they did not intend that one should reside there.

I hope that the representations concerning this particular case that have been submitted to the board of direction in London will have had due weight, and that the necessary instruc-

tions will, ere this, have been given to afford the requisite assistance to the clergyman appointed to the post in providing him with proper accommodation.

I would exclude from the list of Hudson's Bay officials who are antagonistic to the presence of a clergyman at their posts, the present chief trader at Churchill, who, I am quite sure, would do all in his power to make the person appointed as comfortable as possible, provided he was permitted to do so. I will say no more on this subject, for by doing so my remarks may be construed as officious interference, and they might be made the pretext for making matters even worse than they are at present.

The Indians that live in the region of Hudson's Bay are of the Cree tribe, with a few Chippewayans. They are all regarded as servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose policy it has always been to make the natives dependent on the company, by paying them for the skins they procure in advance; the payments are always made in articles of food and clothing. Being, therefore, always in debt to the company, their services as hunters, and in various other positions in connection with the posts, are thus secured; and it is next to impossible for any one, not associated with the Hudson's Bay Company, to acquire their services without first obtaining the sanction of the chief trader.

During our stay at Churchill the time was profitably spent in making as thorough and complete a survey of the harbour as, with the means at our disposal, we were able. It is certainly a most excellent anchorage, completely land-locked, and well sheltered from all winds. There is but little doubt in my mind that Churchill harbour will, if the railway from Winnipeg to Hudson's Bay is ever constructed, be the terminus of the road, as it surely ought to be.

The country in the vicinity of Churchill had a most pleasing and refreshing appearance to us, after being so long accustomed to the sterile aspect of the land in Hudson's Strait. Green, level plains, covered with grass, stretched away beyond the post, whilst, farther yet in the far distance, could be seen a forest of spruce pines; wild flowers, of bright and varied hues, grew luxuriantly, many that are not found in Arctic regions, whilst a great many species of the hardy Arctic flora were here absent. In the chief trader's garden, although it only comprised a plot about 25 feet square, I saw turnips, lettuces, and rhubarb growing; but I was

informed for the vegetable

Church is defended stockade, necessary and even hostile and comparative course, not to fall into

Although stay at Pe what nations of literally t our faces v device was ourselves it was quite entions, and our heads steam face work, than pare it to tection to reached us through and wore.

We were by swarms though mosquitoes, efforts to reach these were a third torn scene, in the is very seldomly called companions they have alight on the men used at night, and employed, i where they free from t venous and mess place that it was i a morsel of incurring the same time

On the 4th our kind friends and all, exerted to make our steamed out

informed that the climate was too severe for the production of potatoes or other vegetables.

Churchill, like all the Hudson's Bay posts, is defended by the remains of an old wooden stockade. These stockades were absolutely necessary in the days when the Indians, and even rival trading companies, were hostile and warlike, but in these days of comparative peace and security they are, of course, unnecessary, and are therefore allowed to fall into disrepair.

Although we all thoroughly enjoyed our stay at Port Churchill, our visit was somewhat marred by the troublesome attentions of the mosquitoes. The air was literally teeming with them, and although our faces were protected by veils, and every device was resorted to in order to defend ourselves from these irritating little pests, it was quite impossible to escape their persecutions, and their interminable buzz round our heads was more like the din heard in a steam factory, when the engines are at work, than anything else that I can compare it to. Gloves afforded but little protection to the hands, and their stings even reached us through our clothing, or, in fact, through anything, and everything, that we wore.

We were also much annoyed on shore by swarms of little sand-flies, which, although more diminutive in size than the mosquitoes, were equally successful in their efforts to render our lives miserable. As if these were not bad enough, yet another and a third tormentor made its appearance on the scene, in the shape of a huge fly, whose bite is very severe and painful—they are commonly called "bull dogs!" As one of my companions facetiously observed: "After they have bitten a piece out of you, they alight on the nearest fence to eat it!" Our men used to spend the greater part of the night, and also the days when they were unemployed, in the tops and other places aloft, where they imagined they would be more free from the persecutions of all these ravenous and insatiable winged torments! Our mess place was so infested with mosquitoes, that it was impossible at meal times to put a morsel of food into our mouths, without incurring the risk of swallowing several at the same time.

On the 4th of August we bade farewell to our kind friends at Churchill, who had, one and all, exerted themselves, and with success, to make our stay there a pleasant one, and steamed out of harbour, not at all sorry to

be, although only for a time, clear of the obnoxious little pests that had so tormented us. If it had been possible for anybody to jest over so serious a matter, we should have been quite justified in laughing at the ridiculous appearance of our men as we took our departure from Churchill, for nearly all of them had their heads and faces bandaged, or wrapped, in handkerchiefs, generally of different colours, in order to protect them from the mosquitoes. They looked as if they were all suffering from earache or toothache, or as if an epidemic of the mumps had broken out in the *Alert!* It was quite impossible, whilst in harbour, to rid ourselves in the ship of these insufferable little torments, for if we killed one, at least a hundred came to its funeral, and afterwards fully avenged its death, and some of our men were really very badly bitten by them.

Early on the morning of the 6th of August we sighted the tall beacon situated on the tongue of land that separates the Nelson River from the Hayes, and on which York Factory is situated, and, shortly after eight o'clock, the anchor was let go in five fathoms twelve miles off the shore, which was only just visible on the horizon. It would have been impossible for us to have approached any nearer, on account of the shallowness of the water.

It is this absence of any harbour, and the long distance at which a ship has to anchor from the shore, that renders the situation of York Factory undesirable for the terminus of the proposed railroad. In this respect it compares very unfavourably with Churchill—otherwise it would be in every way the most desirable, as being a shorter distance from Winnipeg, and through a better, and more productive, line of country.

On the same afternoon I landed at the Factory, where I received a kind and friendly welcome from the chief trader, who hospitably entertained me during my short stay at his post. On landing we were honoured by a salute of seven guns fired from some 12-pounder brass howitzers, that had been left at York Factory by the military expedition that was sent to Fort Garry, *via* Hudson's Bay, in 1846.

York Factory is much more imposing in appearance, and is on a somewhat grander scale than the post at Churchill, and has a very much larger population, with a corresponding increase in the number of officials connected with the station.

There are two small churches, one inside the stockade belonging to the Hudson's Bay



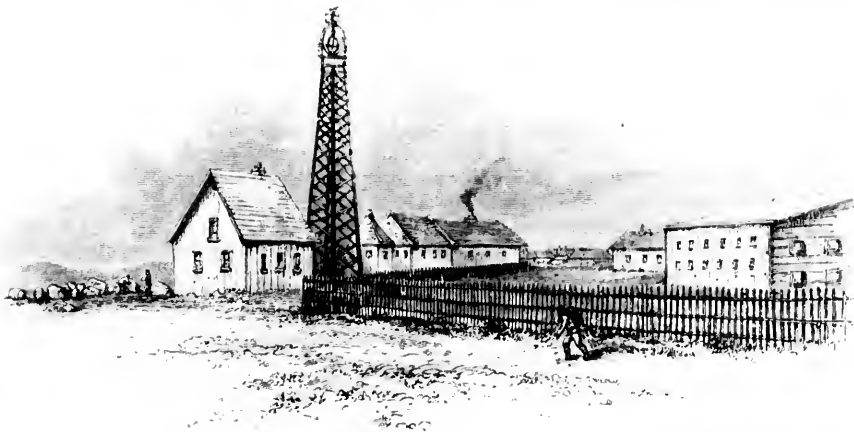
Cree Church.

Company, and the other erected by the Church Missionary Society for the Cree Indians, and situated just outside the post.

As I happened to spend Sunday at York Factory, I attended the afternoon service at the Cree Church, partly out of curiosity to see how the service was conducted, and partly because there was only one service a day, and that in the forenoon, at the other church.

When I entered, the service had just commenced, and so crowded was the church that I had some little difficulty in finding a vacant seat in one of the pews. The congregation

was composed exclusively of Indians and half-breeds, the females sitting together on the left side of the aisle, and the men and boys on the opposite side. The women all had shawls, of a more or less sombre hue, pinned over their heads. As there was no clergyman at York Factory at the time of my visit, the service was conducted by a Cree Indian in a very reverent and apparently earnest manner, and, of course, in the Cree tongue. The hymns were sung in a wailing kind of monotonous cadence, resembling a funeral dirge, and producing a very curious effect. The hymns and chants were led entirely by the man who was officiating. Altogether I was much impressed with the decorous way in which the service was carried out, and with the hearty and sincere manner in which the congregation joined. From what I have seen of these Indians I believe them, or at least the majority of them, to be really good and



York Factory.

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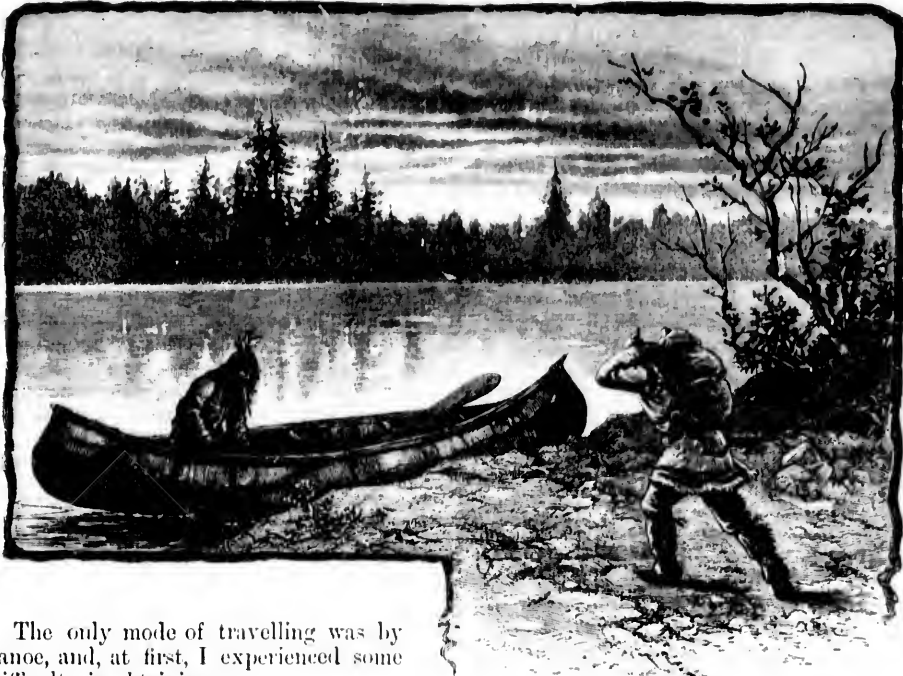
religiously disposed, and I was informed that whenever the Holy Communion was celebrated, there were invariably a large number of communicants among them.

The Cree village is situated about half a mile from the post, and consists of about a dozen log huts, and a number of tepees, or wigwams.

The country round York is comparatively fertile—potatoes were not only growing, but

flourishing, in a small garden inside the post, whilst in a diminutive glass house adjoining the chief trader's residence, I saw a few geraniums, fuchsias and other flowers, all in a very thriving condition. The account of my journey from York must be reserved for the next and concluding chapter.

It was some little time before the arrangements for my journey from York Factory could be perfected.



Getting ready for a start.

The only mode of travelling was by canoe, and, at first, I experienced some difficulty in obtaining one.

At length, this obstacle to my progress being removed, another cropped up—there were no Indians available to accompany me!

This was, of course, a serious and important consideration, for a canoe without Indians is like a cart without a horse—practically useless.

However, thanks to the kindness of the chief trader, without whose help and all-powerful assistance I should never have succeeded in getting on, I managed to obtain the services of a half-breed, commonly called Jem, and a full-blooded Indian, who rejoiced in the name of Biquatenac, but who was more generally alluded to as Tom.

The only arrangement by which I could obtain the services of these men, was by paying them each at the rate of a dollar a

day during the entire period of their absence; *i.e.* I was to pay them their wages during the whole time they were with me, and also after they had left me until their return again to York Factory. I had also not only to supply them with provisions for the time they were away from the post, but was obliged to make arrangements to provide their wives and families with provisions during the period of their absence.

I was only able to make an agreement with my two men to accompany me as far as the next Hudson's Bay post, Oxford House, distant about 300 miles. On my arrival there, I was to make other arrangements to continue my journey, and would also have to

provide myself with another canoe, as the one obtained at York Factory would be required to bring back the men that accompanied me to Oxford House.

The way in which payments are made in the Hudson's Bay territory is very curious. The currency is a skin, but its valuation is very often a varying quantity, and, apparently, depends on the rank and position of the person who has to make the payment. For instance, I had to pay my Indians at the rate of a skin each per diem, and I was charged on the books of the Hudson's Bay Company, as if the value of the skin was five shillings. In the same way the few necessaries that I was compelled to purchase in the Store at York Factory, were charged against me at the same value, namely, five shillings the skin; whereas Indians, and others, who were buying goods at the store at the same time, were charged at the rate of one shilling and three pence per skin!

I suppose it was considered only right and proper that an adventurer and interloper like myself, should be to a certain degree bled; and I think perhaps they were justified in treating me as they did, for it would have been unreasonable to suppose that I could expect to buy things, as it were, in the wilderness, without being charged extortionate prices.

When the tariff was originally instituted, in the early days of the Company, the skin with which the Indians paid the Hudson's Bay officials for guns, powder, provisions, &c., was a prime beaver skin. That was supposed to be the standard: the value of all other skins was comparative to that of the beaver. For instance, half-a-dozen musk-rat, or mink, skins would be valued at half a skin, whilst at least five skins would be the price demanded for the skin of a silver fox. I do not pretend to give the exact value of these skins that I have mentioned; I merely allude to them for the sake of illustration, and as being explanatory of the tariff in vogue in the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Everything being ready for a start, I stepped into my frail little boat at half-past five on the morning of the 9th of August, and having waved farewell to the population of York Factory, who had assembled to witness my departure, paddled gaily up stream.

I am wrong in saying that we paddled, for we did nothing of the sort! As the current was against us, and the banks of the river were suitable to the purpose, my two men

landed and tracked the canoe with a small line, whilst I sat in it, in a very cramped and excessively uncomfortable position, and steered.

Although perhaps it sounds more romantic to "paddle your own canoe," it is far more pleasant to be tracked by two stalwart men, and more rapid progress is made when going up stream; for if the walking is fairly good, the men tracking will get over the ground at the rate of from three, to three and a half miles an hour.

It was a beautiful bright morning when we started, with a fresh, although somewhat cold, breeze blowing, that sent the water rippling up under our bows, and occasionally lapping in over the low sides of the canoe, as we glided noiselessly along.

Our costumes were diversified and somewhat picturesque. Jem, who is my interpreter, boss, and general factotum, was wearing a bright red jumper, made out of a blanket of that colour; trousers of a bluish hue, fastened round the waist by a gorgeous sash, into which every imaginable colour was woven; his shock head of hair confined by an old billycock hat. Tom—I really cannot write his long and almost unpronounceable name again—was more or less shabbily attired. His clothes were in rags, but his long, flowing, and unkempt locks added materially to his picturesque appearance. As for myself, I was wearing a very comfortable kind of a coat made out of a blanket, and having a hood or capote attached to it, which served as a capital substitute for a nightcap when I lay down to sleep; a bright-coloured Hudson's Bay sash was round my waist, sealskin moccasins were on my feet, and an old Zulu straw hat, round which was a veil to keep off the musquitoes, was on my head.

We were, fortunately, not troubled with much baggage, for we found that the weight of twenty days' provisions for three men was quite sufficient for the canoe to carry, and I, of course, had my gun, with a small amount of ammunition. However, I consoled myself with the reflection that the canoe would soon get lighter, for I knew that the Indians were inordinate eaters, and that the provisions would very soon be consumed. We did not anticipate being more than about twelve days on the passage to Oxford House, and before that time my men, I felt assured, would make short work of the allowance for nearly three weeks with which we were provided. My anticipations were fully verified by the result!

A. H. MARKHAM.

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THROUGH HUDSON'S STRAIT AND BAY.

By COMMODORE A. H. MARKHAM, R.N., AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT FROZEN SEA," ETC.

PART IV.—CONCLUSION.

PERHAPS it is as well that I should inform my readers that a canoe is a very tender and fragile article, and has to be taken great care of. It is made entirely from the bark of the birch, spread over a light wooden framework. So tender

are these little craft that a man should not even attempt to step into them with boots; he must either be barefooted, or wear moccasins. Our canoe had, unfortunately for us, been a long time without being used; it was consequently in a very



Going up a Rapid.

leaky condition, compelling us, therefore, during the first four or five days to unload and haul it up on the river-bank for repairs several times during the day, thus causing much delay.

Whenever we halted for this, or any other, purpose, my two men always took advantage of the delay to kindle a fire, make some tea, and eat a meal, quite

unconscious of the fact that they had, in all probability, eaten to repletion only an hour or two before.

Their principal food was boiled salt pork and bread, with unlimited tea. The bread is always made when required, and is generally eaten hot. The flour, being first moistened with the water in which the pork has been boiled, and the more greasy it is the better it is liked, is kneaded into the consistency of dough; a stick, called by the Indians a "ponask," is then procured, and flattened down on both sides, until it bears some sort

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of resemblance to a paddle. The dough is then spread out on the flat side of the ponask with the hand, which is moistened by frequent applications to the mouth of the operator ! The other end of the ponask is stuck into the ground in front of, and close to, the fire, and the cake is thus toasted, first one side and then the other. When cooked it is by no means bad, provided you have not witnessed the operations of the cook ; but then, I think my readers will agree with me, that, even in civilised life, it is as well not to pry too closely into the secrets of the kitchen.



Starting from Oxford House.

Owing to the unusual shallowness of the river, we made but slow progress during the first three days, and we considered ourselves fortunate if we succeeded in accomplishing twenty miles during the day, although we invariably made a start at about four o'clock in the morning, sometimes even earlier, and rarely halted to camp before seven or eight o'clock in the evening.

Our general daily routine was to rise at about four o'clock, make a fire, and refresh ourselves with a cup of tea. I would then walk on in advance with my gun on my shoulder, leaving the canoe to follow : one man tracking and the other guiding the course of the canoe. After walking for about four hours, I would stop to enable the canoe to overtake me ; we would then halt for breakfast, which would occupy about an hour, when we would again proceed in the same manner. At about two o'clock another halt, of an hour's duration, was made for dinner, after which the journey would be continued until dark, when we would halt for the night.

The selection of a camping-ground was, of course, a matter for careful consideration, as we had no tent, and were utterly unprovided with artificial shelter of any description. The place selected was, as a rule, in the vicinity of pine-trees, with, and under, the branches of which we were generally able to

improvise a tolerably good shelter from the rain, and where, comfortably rolled up in our blankets, we slept, or endeavoured to sleep, oblivious to everything except mosquitoes.

Alas ! it was impossible to drive *them* from our thoughts ; waking and sleeping, they seemed part and parcel of our existence. They never gave us a moment's respite from their irritating persecutions ; day and night were alike to them ; they never appeared to need rest, and they certainly gave us none. Veils, which afforded some protection for our heads and faces, were in constant use during the day, nor were they even discarded at night when we retired to rest, and gloves with long linen sleeves sewn on to them, and fastened above the elbows, were always worn.

The weather that we experienced was very changeable, and although the days were excessively warm, with the thermometer ranging very often between 80° and 90°, we had occasionally cold, frosty nights, when we would wake up in the mornings with our moccasins frozen hard, and the water in our kettle converted into ice. Under any other circumstances, to people camped out in the open air as we were, these sudden changes of extreme temperature would have been very trying, but with us it was very different. We hailed the cold with joy, for

it had the effect—but, alas! only while it lasted—of putting the mosquitoes into a kind of torpor, from which they only revived with the advent of the sun and warm weather.

The banks of the river, up which we were slowly making our way, were very high, in some places fully eighty feet, and very precipitous, with numerous landslips, which made walking by no means easy. The spruce, juniper, and poplar, besides the willow, grew in abundance on both sides, whilst the banks in some places were covered with bright flowers, and grass and wild barley grew in great profusion. The farther we advanced inland the more luxuriant became the vegetation, the forests were more dense, and the trees increased in size.

On the whole the walking was execrable, for it was either over rough, rocky ground; or on a marshy quagmire covered with long bulrushes (infested with mosquitoes); or along the talus of the cliffs, which was composed of soft mud, whose surface made an angle of about 45° with the horizon, and in which we sank over our knees. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that after travelling, since morning, for more than twenty miles over country of the above description, we were only too pleased at the end of the day to halt and rest our wearied limbs, although our camp was of the roughest and our fare of the simplest, with but little change in the latter; sometimes, however, I was fortunate enough to bag a few wild duck, teal, or plover, but as a rule the birds were wild and unapproachable.

Traces of cariboo, wolves, and bears were numerous and fresh, but although we saw three of the former, we never succeeded in getting a shot. On the third day out, we met some Indians who had just killed a cariboo, and who, in exchange for some tea and a little tobacco, presented us with some of the meat, which, as may be imagined, was most acceptable and much appreciated.

The Indians are, as a rule, very superstitious, and put much faith in the existence of a Good and Evil Spirit. On one occasion during my journey, my attention was directed by Jem to a point of land immediately ahead of us, and by which we had to pass, called Husky Jack Point. At the same time he warned me earnestly not to point my finger at it, for, he said, if I did so, a furious tempest would assuredly be the result!

In spite of their superstition, the Indians who accompanied me appeared sincere and devout men, for they never omitted to offer up their prayers to the Almighty before

they retired to rest, and before the labours of the day were commenced. In the evening, before they rolled themselves up in their blankets, one, generally Jem, would read aloud a chapter from the Bible translated into the Cree language.

On the evening of the third day, when we had accomplished a distance of about sixty miles from York Factory, it became only too evident that in order to reach Oxford House before our provisions were expended, it would be necessary to increase my crew by the addition of another man. The river was so shallow, owing to the unusual dryness of the summer, and the rapids were so turbulent, that it was more than my two men could do to manage the canoe properly. Numerous delays were consequently the result.

There was only one solution to the difficulty, and that was to unpack the canoe and send her back, thus lightened, with the two men, in order to try and induce one of the Indians from whom we had received the venison, and who we knew were encamped about twenty-five miles down the river, to accompany us. As it was of the greatest importance that I should push on quickly, I offered good wages to anybody who would come.

Having arrived at this decision, as we could not afford to waste time, the canoe was started off at nine o'clock at night, and swiftly sped out of sight in the gloaming, leaving me, like Robinson Crusoe, stranded on the river bank with all our provisions and other paraphernalia, monarch of all I surveyed.

I endeavoured to make myself as comfortable as circumstances would admit, and, as the night promised to be a wet one, I made a fairly good shelter by spreading an old tattered piece of canvas, that had done duty as the bottom cloth of the canoe, over some twigs and branches. Into this lair I crept, having refreshed myself with an excellent cup of hot tea and some bacon, and passed a tolerably comfortable night, in spite of the rain, which fell in a perfect downpour, without intermission, until the following morning. Although this rain had the effect of making me somewhat moist, I consoled myself with the reflection that it would also have the effect of causing the river to rise, and would therefore be doing us more good than harm.

In consequence of everything being saturated with the rain, and therefore, in a measure, unflammable, I had much difficulty in kindling a fire the next morning, and my

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patience and my matches were sorely taxed in my endeavours to do so. Perseverance, however, assisted by some shavings that I procured with my axe from the centre of a log of wood, was eventually crowned with success, and I was soon revelling in the enjoyment of a delicious hot brew of tea.

I think to thoroughly appreciate a good basin of tea it is necessary for a person to be situated as I was, namely, cold, half drenched, and in perfect solitude. Then, if he does not affirm that tea is the best, the most refreshing, and the most soothing beverage in existence, I will say that such a person is a man of no taste, and can have no enjoyment in the pleasures, the unutterable pleasures, of a wild, roving life, untrammelled by cares, and subordinate to no one.

The day passed, but without my Indians making their appearance, and another night was spent in much the same manner as the former one.

There was something indescribably charming about the solitude that surrounded me, and in the perfect stillness that reigned around, broken only occasionally by the crackling of my fire, or by the murmuring of the river as it flowed onwards towards the sea. I felt with Sir Philip Sydney the "delight of solitariness;"

"O how much I do like you, solitariness!
Naught disturbs thy quiet,
All to thy service yields!"

But I was wrong, and had convincing proof of it after I had made the quotation! There was something to disturb the quiet, an unmistakable something, namely, the buzz of the mosquitoes in their too successful attempts to molest and torment me. From their persecutions escape was impossible.

It was not until late on the third evening that I espied the canoe returning, and to my great joy I observed that there were three men in her. Thus reinforced we resumed our journey early on the following morning.

The new man was a great acquisition; he was a full-blooded Cree, rejoiced in the name of Niehi, and, like his countryman Tom, did not understand a word of English; but he was a first-rate fellow, worked like a horse, was as merry as a cricket, and was an excellent and experienced canoeist.

As we proceeded to the southward, the fact that we were leaving behind us the severe rigorous climate of Hudson's Bay, and were entering a more temperate and genial one was very perceptible. The pine forests became more dense, the trees were considerably larger, and birch, and even oak, besides

poplar, were occasionally seen. I also noticed several species of butterflies, and one that from its size and brilliancy of colouring would have done credit to a tropical region.

Next to shooting a rapid, which means coming down one with the stream, taking a canoe up a rapid is one of the most exciting incidents connected with canoe travelling, although it can only be accomplished with success and safety by experienced men. I was quite lost in admiration at the dexterous and skilful way in which my Indians took the canoe up the rapids that lay in our course, and sometimes we would have to go up as many as twenty or thirty during the day. In some the depth of water could only be about four or five inches, with the river rushing over the rocks and stones at the rate of about ten miles an hour.

The general strength of the current, except in the rapids, was from three to five knots.

The way in which the rapids are passed is for one man to track (sometimes up to his waist in water); another man is stationed in the fore part of the canoe with a long pole, with which he is pushing for dear life; whilst the third man sits aft and paddles with might and main, directing the course of the canoe. I invariably sat in the centre of the canoe, assisting as much as possible, when the supreme moment arrived, with my paddle.

It is certainly a most exciting moment when the rapid is entered, and the water is seething and whirling around; when, for a second perhaps, it is even doubtful whether the torrent will not overwhelm us altogether; but the skill and strength of my Indians invariably prevailed, and after perhaps an anxious five minutes, during which time the roar of the waters was so great that it was impossible to make ourselves heard even by those in the canoe, we would shoot out past the rocks and hidden dangers, and rest on the calm, quiescent waters above.

It must not be forgotten that even to touch one of the numerous rocks and stones that lie in your path in going through a rapid in such a frail bark as a canoe is fatal, for such a rent will be made in the bottom of the boat, as to necessitate an immediate and thorough repair, even if the injury is not more serious, and permanently disables or wrecks the canoe.

On the 17th of August we reached a rocky defile, named "the Rock," where not only swift rapids had to be encountered, but waterfalls and cascades had to be passed. In order to pass one of these, a "portage" has to be made, that is to say, the canoe has to

be unloaded below the fall, and everything, canoe included, carried round to a convenient place on the river bank above the fall.

The way in which the Indians carry the goods across a portage is to make a large package, sling it with straps, or rope, and then putting it on their backs, support it with their heads by putting the strap or rope round their foreheads. In this manner they will carry at one time across a portage, a load of two hundred pounds, moving at a quick, slinging trot. The canoe is always the last article to be carried, and this is taken on the shoulders of two men, who run rapidly across the portage with it.

Some of the portages are short, perhaps only twenty or thirty yards, but, on the other hand, others may be a mile long, and these are very tedious, and cause great delay. On one occasion we had to make as many as twelve portages during the course of a day. The majority of the portages are named after some incident that has been enacted in their neighbourhood, or after some event connected with them, thus "Mossy Portage," "Half-breed Portage," "Dead Man's Portage," "Devil's Portage," and so forth.

As an illustration of the keen sight and dexterity of the Indians, I may mention that one day, whilst we were tracking the canoe along the river-bank, Tom, who was on the tracking line, observed a large fish apparently asleep in the water, where the river was not more than two feet deep. Running back to the canoe he hauled it alongside the bank, seized the axe, quickly cut a branch from a neighbouring pine-tree, pointed it, and in less than two minutes from the time he had first seen the fish, he transfixed it with his roughly improvised spear and waved it aloft his head in triumph. It was a species of pike, and was about two feet in length; it proved to be very good eating, and was a pleasant change to our ordinary fare, which consisted entirely of salt pork or bacon, except when I was fortunate enough to shoot something for the pot.

Our work was not always tracking up stream, for sometimes we would emerge on a broad expanse of water, a lake some thirty miles perhaps in length, into which several small rivers flowed. On this we would paddle merrily along, occasionally branching off to the right or to the left, for the purpose of having a shot at a flock of teal, or perchance at some wild duck, but as a rule the birds were so wild and wary that we seldom had an opportunity of getting within range. These

lakes were studded with innumerable islets, all densely wooded, and were excellent places for camping. Wild currants, raspberries, and gooseberries grew along the banks of the rivers and lakes, and afforded a most refreshing repast, when they were found in sufficient profusion to make it worth our while to stop and gather them.

White fish, which are most excellent eating, abounded in the lakes, swimming lazily, or basking near the surface of the water, their dorsal fins just visible above. We endeavoured to catch some of these with hook and line, with spinning bait, and every other contrivance we could think of, but always without success. The only way in which we succeeded in getting a few, was by shooting them with a bullet as they appeared near the top of the water. The Indians catch them in great numbers with nets, indeed they form the principal staple of food for the River Indians.

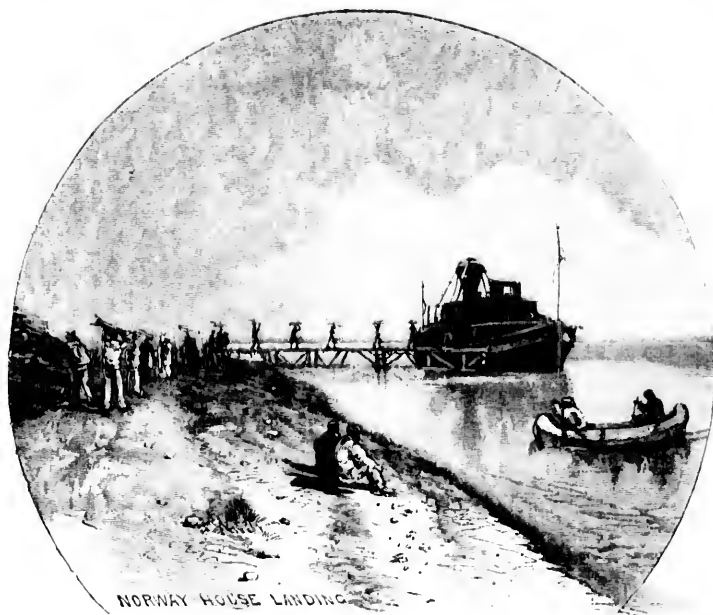
After a hard day's work, of sixteen hours duration, up rapids, across portages, and along lakes and rivers, we reached Oxford House late on the evening of the 21st August, where I was most kindly received by the chief trader and his family, and where I enjoyed a comfortable and hearty supper, and a night's rest with something more than the canopy of heaven as my roof.

The pleasure experienced in partaking of a meal at which new bread, jam, delicious butter, and fresh milk made their appearance is difficult to describe, and when a warm welcome and a kind friendly greeting is added, the discomforts of a canoe journey, and the attendant hardships, are soon forgotten; even the persecutions of the mosquitoes are temporarily banished from our mind, as we lay ourselves out to enjoy our rest and good cheer to the utmost.

As the day following my arrival at Oxford House was a Sunday, I was easily prevailed upon to make it a day of complete rest; besides I had many arrangements to make before I could again set out. I had to get another canoe; to obtain the services of two fresh Indians; to arrange about the provisions, &c.; and to start off my late companions fully victualled for their return journey to York Factory. This all took time, and it was not until Monday morning, the 23rd, that I was again able to proceed on my journey.

Oxford House is a small post in comparison with either York or Churchill. It consists only of one small house for the chief trader and his family, and two other buildings, one the office and store, in which all the goods that

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preaching a most eloquent sermon; at least, I judged so from his fluency and gesticulations.

It was a lovely morning on Monday the 23rd, as we pushed off from the pier at Oxford House and paddled across the lake, but during the day a fresh breeze sprang up right ahead, and this raised an unpleasant lop of a sea which had the effect of completely drenching us, as it splashed up over the low sides of the canoe; it also necessitated our following all the sinuosities of the

are traded to the Indians are kept, and the other the peltry and lumber-house. Like all the Hudson's Bay Company's posts, it is surrounded by a stockade, used in olden times as a means of defence against Indian raids, and in more recent days as a protection from thieves. Although the winters are severe, the climate is mild compared with that of Hudson's Bay, and I noticed potatoes, cabbages, peas, beans, onions, beetroot, and other vegetables growing in the chief trader's garden, whilst in the woods, in a wild state, were gooseberries, currants, strawberries, and raspberries. From the two latter excellent preserves are made.

The Indians in the neighbourhood of Oxford House are the Muskegans, an offshoot of the Cree tribe; their tepes, or wigwams, were different from any that I had seen before, for, instead of being covered with skins, strips of the bark of the birch were used, the same material that is also utilized in the construction of their canoes.

Near the Indian village was a small wooden church and schoolroom, and also a house for the clergyman, but unfortunately it has had no tenant for some time. They were built by the Methodists, but there is some talk now of turning the district over to the Church Missionary Society. When I looked into the church during the afternoon an Indian was in the pulpit, and was, apparently,

coast-line, in order to obtain as much lee as possible from the land, thereby materially increasing the distance we had to paddle. The canoe was very much smaller than the one I had come up in from York Factory, and was therefore all the more frail and cramped. It was, however, in a corresponding degree very much lighter, a matter of some importance when many portages have to be made. Its length was only twelve feet. My new Indians were stolid, apathetic men, who could neither speak nor understand English, but they nevertheless worked hard, and were capital canoeists.

It is needless, and would only be tedious to my readers, for me to enumerate all the lakes with their numerous picturesque little islets, all the rivers with their tortuous windings, and all the rapids and waterfalls that had to be passed, besides all the portages that we were compelled to cross, on our journey to Norway House. We had the same hard work in the canoe, the same simple fare to subsist on, the same rough stones and roots to lie upon, and the same voracious and bloodthirsty mosquitoes to worry and annoy us, as on our journey up from York Factory: the only change was that we had more thunderstorms, and heavy rain showers, to beguile the monotony of the day and night!

The foliage, even at that early time of the season, was beginning to assume its beautiful

autumnal tints, and the bright golden leaves of the poplar, intermixed with the delicate green of the larch, afforded a very striking, but not the less pretty, contrast to the more sombre hue of the pitch-pine and willow.

The country through which I was travelling is as liable to large forest fires, during the autumn, as the more southern part of the continent is subject to its great prairie fires. For two or three days after leaving Oxford House we occasionally had to paddle along the river, for perhaps four or five miles at a time, with a fire raging along both banks; and so dense was the smoke that the sun would be totally obscured for hours together, and our eyes made quite sore as we passed through it. It was a sad sight to see all the trees charred and burned to cinders and the bush totally consumed, whilst the poor birds would be flying about in a most melancholy and utterly depressed manner, vainly seeking for a place to alight and rest, but finding none. I also noticed the bodies of some poor little rabbits floating about in the river; they had evidently been driven into the water by the flames and drowned. The smoke had one good effect, however, for, whilst in it, we were impervious to the attacks of our relentless little persecutors, the musquitos!

One of the lakes that we had to cross was perfectly clogged with a mass of long, sharp-pointed bulrushes, through which we had to force a passage for our canoe. Luckily the wind was in our favour, and therefore blowing the points of the bulrushes *away* from us, otherwise we should have been unable to make progress, for it would have been somewhat similar to charging against a line of infantry with fixed bayonets, and almost as impentable.

Sometimes the river up which we were travelling, would degenerate into a narrow marshy swamp or perhaps partake more of the nature of a thick, black, muddy ditch. In these cases we had to push and shove the canoe along the surface of the mud.

Of all the uninteresting, and I may safely say disagreeable, work that can be imagined, that of pushing a canoe for miles in a black muddy ditch, redolent with the odours of decomposed vegetable matter, or through long and thickly clustered reeds in shallow stagnant water, is perhaps the worst. These swampy localities were also infested by musquitos! Ugh! how they tormented us; but I think I have already shown how terribly we suffered from these abominable little pests!

On the morning of the 27th August, our little trials and miseries were forgotten in the cheerful welcome we received at Norway House, where it appears rumours of my intended visit had been received, and my arrival had, in consequence, been for some time expected. Nothing could exceed the cordiality and heartiness of my reception at this Hudson's Bay post; they were in themselves sufficient to make amends for the recent hardships and privations we had experienced, to say nothing of the enjoyment to be derived by the luxury of a good comfortable bed, and a hearty meal.

My troubles, however, were not quite ended by my arrival at Norway House, for, to my chagrin, I found that it was not so easy as I anticipated to continue my journey from that place. To perform it in a canoe would be almost impossible, and would certainly require a long time to accomplish; the waters of Lake Winnipeg are as turbulent and as boisterous in a gale of wind as the Atlantic ocean, therefore, unless I had unlimited time at my disposal, (which I had not) to travel by canoe was quite out of the question. The difficulty was, however, solved through the kind exertions of the Factor, who ascertained that a party of Indians was about to start for Winnipeg in a large flat-bottomed boat, and, for a consideration, they were willing to allow me to accompany them. Nothing could have turned out more fortunate, and it was not long before all the necessary arrangements were made with my new friends, provisions prepared, and everything in readiness for the continuation of my journey.

The morning of the 30th was wild and stormy; a strong gale was blowing from the northward, accompanied by heavy rain and hail showers, with violent squalls. Nevertheless this was the day fixed for our departure, and after taking leave of my kind friends at the post, I embarked with my new travelling companions to perform the last stage of my journey.

Our party consisted of twelve Indians, four men, two squaws, and six papposes (two of whom were babies in arms!) and myself, thirteen in all. The boat was a long, heavy, flat-bottomed barge, a kind frequently used on the rivers on account of their shallow draft (which is only 11 inches), for carrying the skins and stores from one trading post to another. The mast was of a very primitive character, being a pine-tree that had been cut down in the morning; it was stepped in the centre of the boat, and was

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supported by four shrouds; the sail was simply a square piece of old canvas without any pretension to cut or shape, and could only be used when the wind was fair. The boat was guided by a heavy steer oar, and could be propelled, although very slowly, through the water by oars when it was quite calm.

In this cumbersome conveyance we sailed down the river from Norway House, not without considerable excitement and terror, especially on the part of the ladies and children, in consequence of the strong wind that prevailed, and the next day saw us fairly launched on the waters of Lake Winnipeg. It was almost difficult to realize that we were really sailing on the bosom of an inland lake, and not on the high sea. The coast along which we sailed was low and fringed with pine-trees, the shore being flat and shelving, with little wavelets curling and rippling up over it. In bad weather, however, the lake assumed a totally different aspect; large waves came rolling in, lashed into white foam as they broke over the rocks on shore, and such a turbulent sea would be raised that travelling in our crazy and unseaworthy boat was rendered quite impossible.

On these occasions the boat would be secured in some sheltered bay, and we would remain encamped until the weather moderating enabled us to proceed. It was surprising how quickly a fairly comfortable camp could be formed by my companions. A convenient place in the woods, as close as possible to the boat, would be selected, and a space sufficiently large for the party speedily cleared by the axe, deftly wielded by the practised hands of the Indians. To its blows tall pines and poplars had to yield, and the willow and scrub disappeared. In the event of rain a fairly good shelter was afforded, at any rate for the women and children, by means of the boat's sail spread out on poles specially cut for the purpose. A large fire was then made, and the operations of cooking would commence. Supper being disposed of, we rolled ourselves up in our blankets and would soon be fast asleep, oblivious to rain, wind, or cold. It is marvellous the amount of protection that a good Hudson's Bay blanket will afford from the rain, and although the outside may be, apparently, saturated with wet, the sleeper will unroll himself in the morning comparatively dry.

The party of Indians with whom I travelled to Winnipeg appeared to be quite as devout as those with whom I had journeyed from York Factory; not a morning, or an

evening, passed without the customary family devotions, generally conducted by the oldest member of the party, and preceded by a hymn in which all reverently joined. It was pleasant on a fine clear night to see the party assembled round the bright flames of our camp fire, and to hear them singing, in very guttural tones, the evening hymn to a tune somewhat resembling that of the "Old Hundredth." I could not help comparing these semi-wild creatures of the North-West with a party of white men similarly situated, and the comparison was very much to the disadvantage of the so-called civilized man.

But I am reminded by the number of pages that I have already written that there is a limit to all things, including the patience of my readers, and more especially the length of this article.

I will not, therefore, enter into any further details connected with my journey down Lake Winnipeg; suffice it to say, that in consequence of the bad weather we experienced (and also I think chiefly on account of the *composition* of my party, for it is impossible, for various reasons that it is needless for me to enter into, to travel with females and children as rapidly as you can without them), the time occupied in reaching Winnipeg was longer than we anticipated it would be when we started from Norway House. The result was that we ran short of provisions, and for two days before reaching Selkirk, on the Red River, had nothing but a little flour to subsist on. Birds and game of any description were conspicuous by their absence; occasionally we were fortunate enough to shoot a gull or two (*Larus argentatus*), which was eagerly devoured by my famishing party after being cooked, but otherwise we were absolutely without food.

At length, on Sunday, September 12th, my vagabond life came to an end, and I bade adieu to my late fellow-travellers, not without a pang of regret, for I had learnt to regard them with feelings of friendship and esteem, and taking the train at Selkirk was carried on to Winnipeg.

This practically terminated my cruise, my wanderings were at an end, and civilization was reached.

My trip was as successful as I could possibly have wished it to have been. I had succeeded in accomplishing that which I had set myself to do, namely, to travel from England to Winnipeg by water, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had achieved the distance in a very much shorter time than it had ever before been performed.

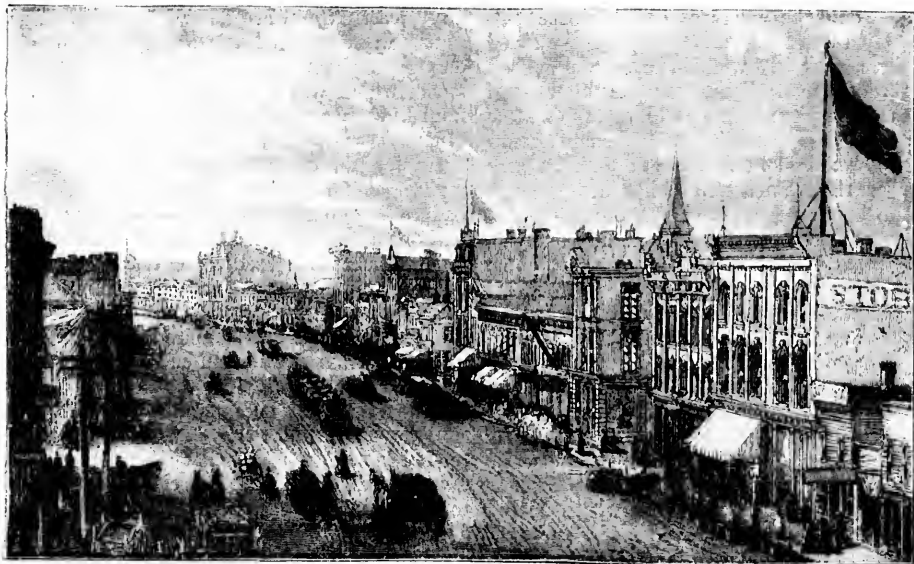


In a Storm on Lake Winnipeg.

My opinion regarding the feasibility of an ocean route between England and Hudson's Bay is decidedly a favourable one, and I have so reported; whether it will be successful in a financial point of view is a question for others to decide, it is one that did not lie within the scope of my instructions to answer, nor have I sufficient knowledge of the requirements of the proposed railroad even to offer an opinion on it. The country through which I travelled is admirably adapted for the construction of a line, no tunnels are necessary, and but few cuttings, whilst the rivers and streams that would

cross the line of route are so narrow, that the expense of throwing bridges across them would be very small indeed.

I only hope that the result of my journey will not be altogether fruitless, and that we may soon hear that Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay have been connected by rail; the consequences of such a connection will, I am quite sure, be the commercial development of a very large extent of country, and the increased prosperity of the Dominion of Canada. For such a consummation all those who pride themselves on the greatness and welfare of the British Empire will assuredly pray.



Main Street, Winnipeg.



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